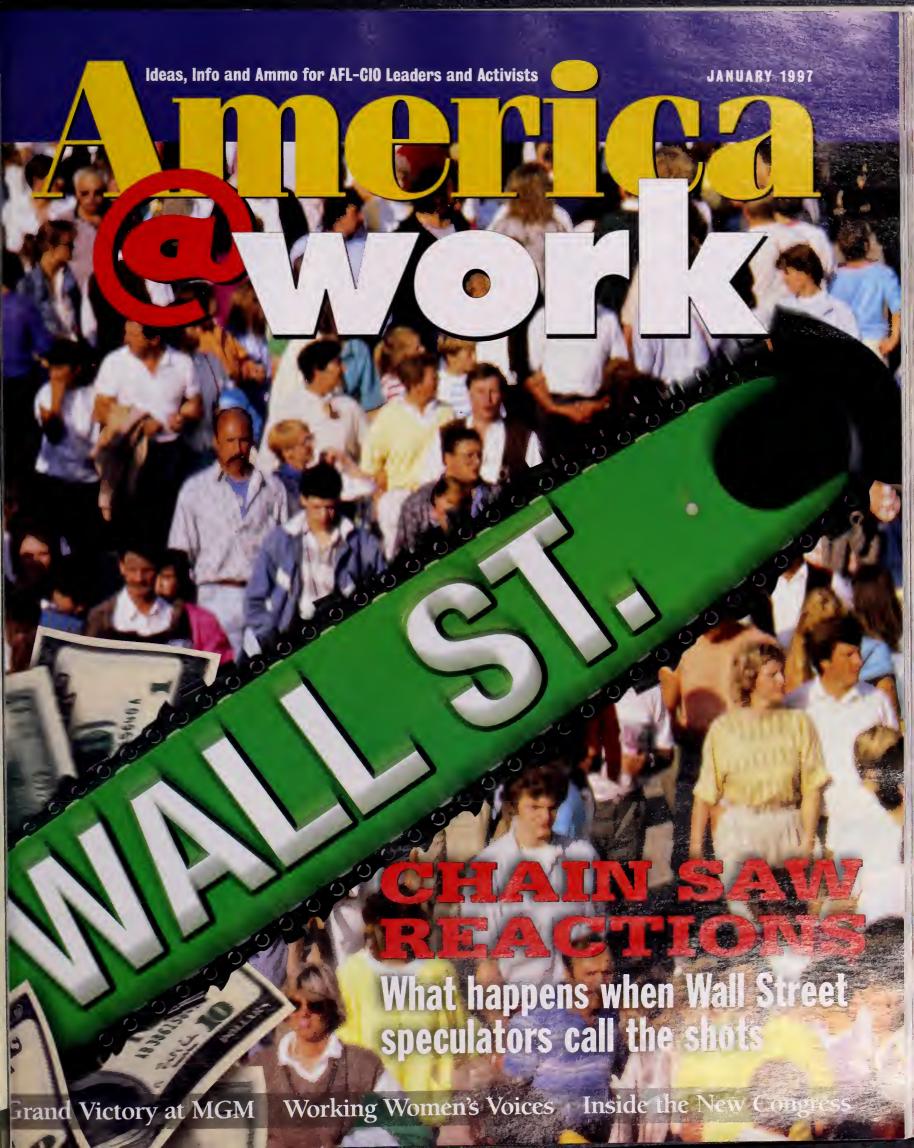
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Ideas and Views From You



@ Two important points that came out of your roundtable discussion (Nov./Dec. issue) were the need for a good organizing director who is aggressive, motivational and a good teacher, and the need to set small, realistic goals. We have to educate our members. It's difficult to get members to commit money. It's the give versus the get. Members have to realize that the pendulum swings both ways and unless we organize we will be in a worse position when it comes time to bargain.—Marv Russow, president, UFCW Local

(a) Your coverage of new union organizing is a testament to the fact that the labor movement has to do whatever is necessary to protect the rights of workers. Labor has been under attack since the 1980s and it's about time we started fighting back with the furor and tenacity of a real movement. Business is certainly going to protect its own interest.—Julius Cephas, president, AFSCME Local 320, Wilmington, Del.

We've made a commitment to allocate 20 percent of our budget to organizing. We are also putting in \$50,000 to pay for release time so some of our members can work on organizing campaigns. And we're going to transfer two servicing staff members into our organizing unit. We know we have to do this, because if we don't we won't have a labor movement.—Kristy Sermersheim, executive secretary, SEIU Local 715, San Jose, Calif. (a) As leaders of the labor movement it is our job to explain and lead the members to go

in this direction with us. They're looking for answers. If we can come up with those answers and show them they can do something about the situation, they'll do it. But if we're more comfortable with saying don't worry, we'll take care of it, then we'll keep getting what we always have gotten—and that's less and less.—Jana D. Smith, president, CWA Local 7777, Englewood, Colo.

DIRECT FEEDBACK

@ Great job! America@Work is an outstanding publication. All stewards have to do is leave a copy on their desk. The cover is so eye-catching that employees walking by automatically pick it up and flip through the articles. It helps give members the sense that they are part of a labor movement that has found its voice.—Mike Sidell, president, IFPTE Local 149, Lynn, Mass.

The new magazine is far more flash than substance and if, as claimed, it is aimed at activists and leaders, it is woefully short of real ammo. I think the short pieces fill a function of teasing people into seeking more information, but some longer stories would help appease the hunger that the small stories whet.—Drew Mendelson, CSEA/SEIU Local 1000, Sacramento.

What's your point of view? Write, fax or e-mail to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908. E-mail:71112.53@compuserve.com. Internet: http://www.aflcio.org.

When you see unions@work

and our members@work

and collective power in our communities@work,

that's when you see

ABOUT LAST SUMMER

Oct. issue) was the first

time I had ever been around so many young

people whom I could relate to because they all care enough about the world to spend

their lives changing it. Meeting this group

was comforting and empowering in itself.

With them I discovered the immeasurable

strength of a group over an individual.—

(a) If many of the 1,000 Union Summer

interns go back to our lives and tell our

friends what we saw and learned and did,

and commit ourselves to seeking and learn-

ing and doing more, it could revitalize not just the labor movement but the entire

American Left.—Laura Clawson, Wesleyan

Malini Srinivasan, Reed College.



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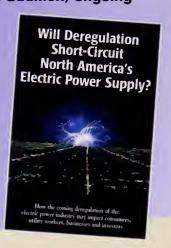
Leading the Charge for **Electrical** Consumers

he Electrical Workers are trying to put the brakes on the electric utility industry's rush to deregulation by calling for intense scrutiny of some of the more radical proposals.

The union warns that rapid, extreme deregulation may cause power companies to "cherry-pick" the most attractive customers while neglecting residential, small business and rural customers. In addition, ongoing

restructuring means continued job and financial instability. The net result could be higher rates, less reliable service, elimination of environmental and conservation programs and job losses.

These and other issues are addressed in "Will Deregulation **Short-Circuit North America's** Electric Power Supply?," a 12-page booklet produced by the IBEW. To get a copy, contact the IBEW Journal at 202-728-6135. @



HOUSTON'S LIVING WAGE FANS

oters in Houston will decide if "Six-fifty for the City" becomes law this month, when they vote on an initiative to turn the minimum wage into a living wage. That's because a campaign last fall by the Houston Coalition for a Living Wage—community groups, students, churches and unions—gathered more signatures (30,000) to raise the minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour than the Oilers typically draw fans to the Astrodome.

Some 54,000 workers in the Texas oil capital earn the minimum wage, and thousands more restaurant workers are paid less.

"People who go to work every day and perform service jobs that are essential to our society must earn a living wage for themselves and their families," says Richard Shaw, secretary-treasurer of the Harris County

Not surprisingly, Houston's business community has mounted an opposing campaign. "All they want to do is make more money at the expense of working people," says Victor Trevino, county constable and former UFCW meatcutter.

MARYLAND'S FIRST TO JOIN

joint organizing campaign by AFSCME, the Teamsters and the AFT has already convinced some of the 40,000 Maryland state employees to vote for union representation.

Following the governor's executive order granting them bargaining rights, one group to sign up were the 7,800 safety and correctional officers, a unit that voted in early December to be represented jointly by AFSCME and the IBT.

AFSCME also won three elections for units covering more than 10,000 in labor and trades, health and human services and social services.

State workers got the message through a mix of radio ads, leafleting, home and workplace visits, direct mail and rallies. The unions' direct mail campaign reached more than 75 percent of the work-



ers despite a law prohibiting the state from providing names and addresses. The unions reached out to these workers through organizing committees and workplace and home visits.

visits sway state workers

Organizing in the Orchards

The Farm Workers and the Teamsters continue their joint campaign to organize some of America's lowest-paid workers—40,000 farmworkers and 17,000 packinghouse workers in Washington state's apple industry. Last year, the two groups earned an annual average of \$5,750 and \$11,000, respectively, compared with average earnings in the state of \$26,400.

Most of the apple pickers work on a piecework basis for about a penny per pound, and are exposed to dangerous pesticides. Meanwhile, the industry took in more than \$1 billion in 1995, with revenues expected to approach \$1.7 billion in 1996.

"There's real excitement working together in a project of this magnitude,"

says Teamsters organizer Lorene Scherr. "We've seen some real vision and guts" by the warehouse workers, she says, adding that they are "hooked at the hip" with orchard workers, many of them their spouses, brothers and cousins. "Workers see it is time to organize and get growers to share some of the wealth," says Guadalupe Gamboa, the UFW's apple



EARL DOTTER

4 America@Work



The heat of winter: Interns carry on the mission

UNION SUMMER: WHERE ARE THEY INC

fter a summer of activism in Sacramento, Grant Lindsay, 20, returned to Wesleyan University and began organizing. He and several other Union Summer alumni at the Connecticut campus formed a coalition to help HERE Local 217 workers fight to replace a ventilation system in the student center that is making them sick. They have collected 1,200 signatures and are continuing the struggle through political theater and leafleting.

The Union Summer program launched last year was designed to

whet young people's appetites for activism, and that's exactly what has happened. Around the country, interns are carrying on their work by forming labor support groups on campus or going on staff at unions.

At George Washington University, Deniece Hopkins and two other interns are organizing to educate and mobilize students and faculty around worker issues.

Diallo Brooks, a 24-year-old Shepherd College graduate and a rider on Union Summer's Southern Bus Tour, spent the fall doing advance work for Rev. Jesse Jackson's Get Out The Vote campaign.

And Dara Barlin returned from her stint in Boston to join a core of Union Summer activists on New York's Barnard College campus in support of striking members of the UAW Local 2110. Their spirited rallies and campus meetings turned up the heat and helped bring a settlement of the strike. "Most of my generation is pessimistic about the future," she says. "But Union Summer convinced me that the labor movement can bring people together and solve the problems in our country."

Campus Workers Prevail at Yale

A year-long contract fight at Yale University ended in triumph for 3,700 members of HERE Lozcals 34 and 35 last month. Just days after a massive demonstration in which 312 workers and supporters—including AFL-CIO President John Sweeney—were arrested, the workers won an extraordinary new six-year agreement calling for raises, pension improvements and protections against subcontracting.

"Thanks to the courage of our membership and the heroic efforts of community activists, these contracts offer the best job security provisions in the country," says Local 34 President Laura Smith.

And They Said It Wouldn't Last

ne year after it was created by striking *Detroit News* and *Free Press* workers, the *Detroit Sunday Journal* now is the largest circulation weekly newspaper in Michigan. "They said we couldn't get the paper started. They said we wouldn't last," says features editor Robert Musial, a striking writer. "Well it's a year later, and we're still here."

Launched in late 1995 with financial help from unions, the paper—with \$2.5 million in advertising and subscription revenues—has been self-supporting since the spring of 1996. Staffed by some of the nation's best journalists, the *Journal* has scooped the strike-bound papers on several stories, including indictments of organized crime figures and the Lions' plans to move back to Detroit.

Meanwhile, support is still strong throughout the labor movement, which continues to stage fundraising events and rallies to highlight the ongoing struggle.

The paper is "one of the most powerful and most effective tools we have to win this strike,"

says Susan Watson, a striking columnist who co-edits the *Journal*. "It gives readers and advertisers an alternative, and it tells the world we aren't going anywhere until this is resolved with fair contracts."

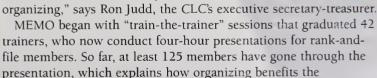
Contact the *Journal* at 313-567-9818 or on the web at http://www.rust.net/~workers/strike.html.



A MEMO from Seattle

he King County Central Labor Council has come up with a way to help mobilize union members and play a lead role in organizing in Seattle. Last July, it launched MEMO—the Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing program—an ambitious effort to train and energize a cadre of rank-and-file organizers.

"We're trying to change the way all the affiliates and the community think about



community.

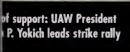
Once the members are excited about organizing, their enthusiasm is plugged into a current local organizing activity, such as the Teamsters drive at BFI and OPEIU's campaign at the Seattle housing

What makes MEMO so effective, says Judd, is the unity that comes when members of different unions train and work or organizing drives together. "When you have a mixture of unions, they start thinking of the labor movement differently. They're all and together and they understand you have to collectively organize to make the trade union movement stronger."

- James B. Parks

authority.







Currents

ALAN WYCHECK

ERE Local 25 made headlines in the nation's capital last December by organizing 138 workers at the Washington National Airport Hilton. The big news, however, wasn't that they had won an NLRB election (which they did, 70 to 65). It was that the union

CR#SSING S+A+E LINES

had managed to organize workers across the Potomac river in right-to-work Virginia.

The Hilton is now the first orga-

nized hotel in either the Virginia or Maryland suburbs of D.C.—but not the last. The local is undertaking a comprehensive and strategic organizing drive in the suburbs, particularly at hotels near the airport that compete directly with those downtown.

Put Pennsylvania on the Right Path

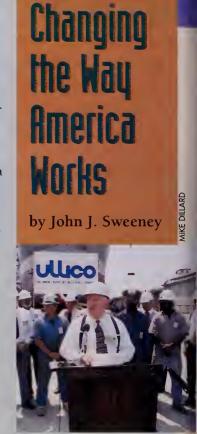
ore than 15,000 workers and their families recently raised their voices at the State Capitol in Harrisburg, Penn., objecting to Gov. Thomas Ridge's policies on prevailing wages, school vouchers, privatization, "workfare," the sale of state liquor stores and unemployment and workers' compensation.

"Pennsylvania may be open for business, but it is the wrong kind of business. Jobs that pay lousy wages, with uncertain futures, do not sustain families," state AFL-CIO President Bill George said at the November 19 rally, which was organized by the Pennsylvania Building and Construction Trades Council.

OUT FRONT

ne of the most exciting ceremonies I've attended during the last year took place at the Newport News shipyard, where we celebrated an investment in six super tankers that will be built by 28,000 union members and union-crewed at sea. The project was made possible by a labor-business partnership put together by the Union Labor Life Insurance Co. and shows how we can invest workers' own resources to create jobs and shared growth.

For far too long, America's growth and prosperity has not been shared. Most of the new income created over the last two decades went to the wealthy, while most working families fell behind. At the root of this growing wage and wealth gap are get-rich-quick schemes by Wall Street investors who promote downsizing and outsourcing strictly for short-term financial gains (see page 10).



Tragically, labor's own financial assets, cash flow, pension funds and other capital resources are often deployed in these short-term speculative games—at the expense of our long-term economic security.

It makes no sense for workers to devote the fruits of their labor to enterprises that reward them by handing out pink slips. We must seek a future other than the one offered by Wall Street, one in which the benefits of a growing economy are equally shared. We must harness workers' investments and make our money work for us, as we did in Newport News.

That's why we have created a new Corporate Affairs department and an Office for Investment at the AFL-CIO, which will work closely with our Executive Council's Pension Committee. Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka is leading the effort to develop strategies for using our resources to demand a voice for workers in the economy.

We have our work cut out for us. But if we don't take the lead in investment strategies that make the American economy an engine of prosperity for our children and grandchildren, who will?

Our success hinges on our ability to build and change the American labor movement in four ways. Above all, we must organize workers and restore our position as an effective counterbalance to the power of corporate America. We must build a political voice that will bring an end to corporate welfare policies and put issues such as health care, education, fair trade and tax fairness at the top of the national agenda. We must strengthen ties with our allies and our role in our communities. And we must create a voice in our economy, one that gives workers a say in capital investments and work decisions that affect their lives.

Only then can we accomplish our mission to improve the lives of working families—to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation.

NEWSMAKERS

- Close vote at the IBT: When the votes were counted in mid-December, incumbent Teamsters President Ron Carey declared victory over challenger James P. Hoffa for a second five-year term as head of the AFL-ClO's largest affiliated union. In the second direct election in the union's history, roughly half a million mail-back ballots were cast. Carey won with 52 percent of the vote.
- New faces at the IUE: Ed Fire and Ronald Gilvin assumed the two top offices of the Electronic Workers on Jan. 1, following their election at the union's International convention last November. Fire, who defeated former President William Bywater, had served as the union's secretary-treasurer for 14 years.
- Merger ahead: The 40,000 members of the Aluminum, Brick & Glass Workers (ABG) are soon to be USWA members, following a merger vote by ABG delegates in December. Retiring ABG President Ernie LaBaff said the merger would bring "clout, dignity and respect" to ABG members. Steelworkers President George Becker called it a natural fit for two "democratic, industrial unions with the same ideals and proud heritages." The merger takes effect Jan. 20.
- New affiliate: A warm welcome goes to 3,100 members of the Mechanics Educational Society of America who affiliated with the UAW on Jan. I. MESA represents skilled trades and production workers in Ohio, Michigan and New York.

CHECK OF CARDS

A Grand Victory at MGM

as Vegas hotel and casino workers continue to inspire the labor movement with a dynamite combination of innovative approaches and good old-fashioned union activism. The most recent result is union representation for 2,900 employees of the world's largest hotel, the MGM Grand.

Culinary Workers Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165, both affiliated with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, did it with a determined three-year campaign that persuaded the hotel to cease anti-union activity and motivated a majority of the workers to sign union authorization cards—and did not involve the National Labor Relations Board.

The drive to unionize MGM Grand workers began even before ground was broken, and exemplifies the union's guiding philosophy to involve the rank and file, field a highly-trained, tenacious organizing staff and dig in with a crackerjack research team.

The union's comprehensive campaign included analysis that turned up costly flaws in MGM's construction bond offering and exposed MGM Grand Chairman Robert Maxey's management track record—where "his forte had been fighting unions," says D. Taylor, staff director of Local 226.

Combined with a local union membership that refused to cede the sidewalk outside while MGM workers organized inside, the campaign was unquenchable. As at the Frontier Hotel, where for the past five years HERE has sustained the longest-running strike in America, the Culinary local sent a strong message.

"We let the employers and the public know that if the union is taken on, it will not go away," Taylor says. That was demonstrated by a mass protest in 1994, when 497 union members were arrested outside the hotel—and by the success of the campaign's strategy to coordinate national

labor opposition to MGM Grand's expansion into new jurisdictions.

Shareholders finally ousted Maxey in 1995 after he ran up losses of more than \$6 million in two years, bucking the trend toward hefty profits among other Las Vegas casinos. His successor, J. Terence Lanni, agreed later that year to a card check and neutrality in the organizing campaign.

"HERE led a smart, sophisticated organizing campaign which showed this company that its success depended on positive labor relations," says AFL-CIO President

John Sweeney. The AFL-CIO supported the campaign with resources to augment the HERE program.

The Culinary local is HERE's largest affiliate, and has doubled in size to 40,000 members since 1987. It has helped make Las Vegas one of the most unionized cities in the country.

"Some people think Vegas is a wise-guy town, a place where top-down deals are made. But like so many others, it's a city where multinational corporations are doing business," says Taylor. "We've been successful because we've been aggressive in organizing. We've involved the rank and file, employed and trained dedicated organizers and researchers, looked strategically at companies—and made tough decisions, including committing resources to organizing and using our power to win recognition rather than going to the NLRB.

"Our ability to get any of these neutrality agreements has been due to those factors," Taylor says.

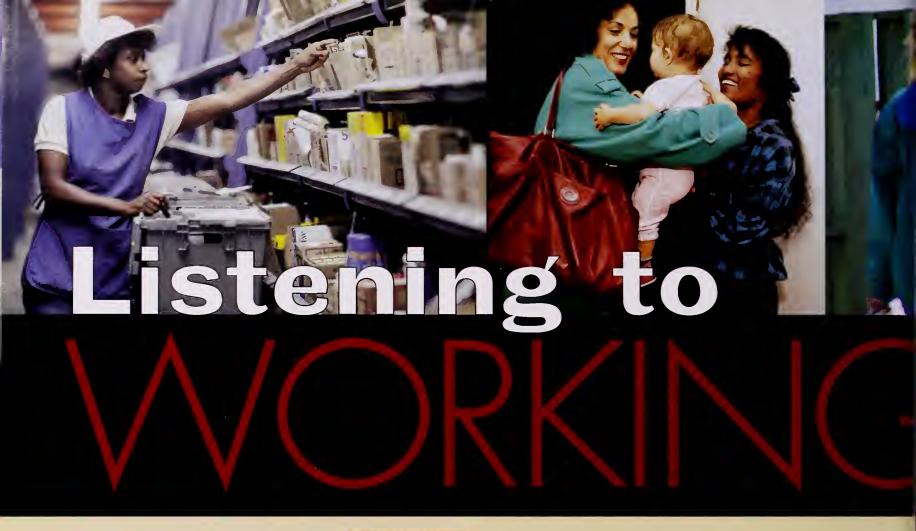
Just days after the MGM win, the unions also won recognition for some 400 workers at the new Main Street Station. Other recently organized hotels include the Monte Carlo and Stratosphere, and new campaigns are now uncer way among thousands of workers at New York New York and the Four Queens Flow.

-Sharolyn A. Rosier



Take on a powerful employer without going to the NLRB





We asked four diverse groups of women in Chicago and Baltimore to talk about their work and family roles, the problems they face and what could be done to improve their lives. They came from a variety of occupations, ethnic backgrounds and education levels—some organized and some not—but their experiences and concerns were strikingly similar. Through their voices, a common agenda for America's working women can be heard.

his morning as I left for work, I had my briefcase. I was looking for my shoes. I was looking for my daughter's shoes. I had my portable breast pump in one hand, and the babysitter was holding the little one, and I thought: I'm living the cliché. This is like the photo from the women's magazine from hell."

This was the voice of a white college-educated woman from Chicago, but the picture she drew of a never-ending juggling act could have been any working woman's. Whether African-American, Caucasian or Latina, regardless of occupation or educational background, union and unorganized alike, working women described their lives as "hectic," "rushing," "frantic" and "chaos."

The pressures working women experience in their dual work and family roles are hardly new. For decades now, a majority of women have been working outside the home and "spreading themselves thin." "At work we have deadlines, at home we have deadlines," they say. "We have to budget our time a lot more carefully than other people."

But instead of getting easier, many women say it's harder than ever to juggle work and family. "The church was more involved in the family years ago. The community was more involved," said an African-American woman from Baltimore. "Everything is harder now. I don't see anything that has come up in the last 10 years that makes balancing the two easier."

It doesn't help that real family income is on the decline, women's pay continues to lag far behind men's and working families are feeling financially squeezed and insecure about the future. To make matters worse, working women see opportunities for advancement disappearing as corporations and governments tighten their belts.

"Supervisors should be more tolerant of the working mother who has children in school. You've got more working women than ever, and if they don't work, the children don't eat."

—A working woman in Baltimore



"Working women are telling us that they need equal pay, economic security and more flexibility in their schedules," says Linda Chavez-Thompson, AFL-CIO executive vice president. "Whether she's a grocery store clerk or a college administrator, a working woman is likely to be most concerned about these three issues."

In addressing these issues, working women believe that employers should be willing partners. For one thing, they say, more flexible schedules would boost employee morale. "Not only would it improve the individual quality of life, it would improve the company," said one woman.

"Supervisors should be more tolerant of the working mother who has children in school," said another, who occasionally leaves work early to pick up her child. "You've got more working women than ever, and if they don't work, the children don't eat."

Working women want employers to assume more responsibility for their economic security as well, particularly in the areas of retirement, health care benefits and education—the latter being the key to securing a better job. Whatever happened to tuition reimbursement? one woman wondered. "Companies used to do it all the time. Now they are very, very selective on what they will do in terms of actual training."

But while they believe it's in employers' best interests to be more flexible and accommodating, working women also recognize a role for the government to play in improving their lives—and frequently cite the Family and Medical

"We are one person but we are everything. We give birth. We take care of our children, we work, we put gas in our cars, we feed the dog. We take the kids to the doctor. Do the shopping. If there are any repairs at home, you fix them yourself."

—A working woman in Chicago

Leave Act as an example.

"It's not the first place they go to for help," says Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department. "But women are much more open to the idea of government involvement than men."

"Working women believe without a doubt that women are not paid as much as a man for the same work," she adds, "and they see responsible government as part of the solution."

What they rarely identified as part of the solution are unions or women's organizations. But when they were asked to react to the idea of a working women's organization, one that would advocate for them in the workplace and in politics, women were enthusiastic.

The ideal women's organization, they said, would communicate frequently with its members and "listen to their needs." It would be "inclusive," a group of "employed women of all

ages, races and backgrounds who get together and share their ideas." It would set "practical, realistic and attainable goals." And it would "be visible and vocal, but not militant."

They also want to see more women rise to become leaders who are "strong, demanding, enthusiastic, sympathetic, comforting and, who because they are women, know your needs," said one woman. Or, as another put it, "Women know what women want."

Working Women Organize: This year, the AFL-CIO will lead a campaign to reach out to working women through surveys and worksite visits and hold a major national meeting for working women who are arganizing. We'll share more information on this new initiative in upcoming issues.



Wall Street speculators are pushing America down the low road. Only we can stop them.

itable Biddeford Textile Co. in Maine

The king of downsizers: "Chain Saw Al" Dunlap offers no apologies

e's back. When the man known as Al "Chain Saw" Dunlap recently took over their plant's parent company, 350 union members who make blankets at the prof-

knew exactly what was coming. "They know he makes his money by disposing of workers," says Michael Cavanaugh of UNITE. "He's been here before. He sold

> off a couple of Scott Paper mills in Maine a couple of years ago and lots of workers lost their jobs."

True to form, as the brand new chairman of Sunbeam Corp., Chain Saw Al laid off 40 Biddeford workers and announced his intention to discard the plant. In all, Dunlap plans to eliminate half of Sunbeam's 12,000 jobs, shutter 18 of its 26 factories and close

37 of its 61 warehouses.

If the pattern holds, Chain Saw Al won't be around very long. He moves from company to company, leaving little behind but scorched earth and shattered lives. In his last job at Scott Paper, it took him only 18 months to lay off 11,200 workers, sell off the company's remains and walk away with a personal fortune of \$100 million. An unabashed and outspoken proponent of downsizing as a way to "rescue" ailing corporations, Dunlap offers no apologies. "The point of business is to make a profit," he says. "The responsibility of the CEO is to deliver shareholder value, Period.'

Is this how America is supposed to work? No. Making profits is one thing. The speculative make-a-fast-buck mentality on Wall Street is quite another. And this syndrome, often called "shorttermism," is what's driving wages down and forcing tens of thousands of workers onto the streets.

Stock markets thrive on the earning surprises or "spikes" that downsizing and outsourcing produce, even if it means sacrificing the company's long-term health and shareholder value. To Wall Street speculators, corporations are strictly investments—they don't have to live with a company after they've siphoned off its assets. For their part, corporate executives cater to this demand for short-term earning hikes, and as major shareholders often are enriched by them as well. In the end, they ignore the other stakeholders involved—the employees and communities who depend on businesses for their livelihoods.

"The problem with our society isn't that corporations are making profits," says Ron Blackwell, AFL-CIO corporate affairs director. "The problem is that American workers are no longer sharing in the prosperity they help create."

Which Way, America?

It wasn't always this way. After World War II, many American corporations headed up what is commonly referred to as the "high road." As the economy grew, productivity increased and union membership rose, the

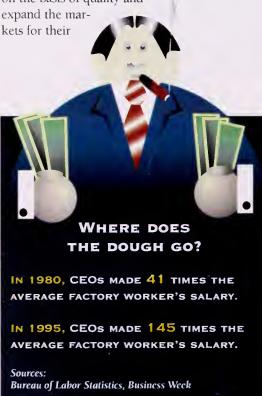


LEON WILLIS/UAW SOLIDARITY

High road: Autoworkers keep the Big Three on track

newly-created wealth was distributed (though unevenly) among the American work force. The result in the 1950s and 1960s was the most dramatic increase in living standards in history, one that built the American middle class.

But during the 1970s, all that changed. Corporate America took a dramatic turn down the "low road." Overreacting to growing global competition, businesses went off in pursuit of cheaper labor at home and abroad. Rather than compete on the basis of quality and



goods and services, they chose to increase their profit margins by outsourcing to low-wage markets and shipping jobs overseas. As productivity grew and profits soared, the rich got richer while America's working families were left behind. Over the last 20 years, real earnings declined and average family income stagnated—leaving America with the most uneven distribution of wealth of any major industrialized nation.

What happened during this time can best be described as a massive shift in power to corporate America. As union membership plummeted—from roughly one third of the work force to 15 percent of it—America lost its only effective counterweight to corporate power. To make matters worse, government responded to the growing imbalance of power not by holding it in check but by encouraging it. Wall Street demanded a slowdown in economic growth, free trade policies, a reduced share of the tax burden, balanced budget initiatives, lax labor and other regulations—and the Reagan and Bush administrations went along. The result: More power for corporations, more short-term management, more good jobs lost in both the public and private sectors and a country heading further and further down the low road.

So how do we push America back onto the high road? No one has all the answers. But we do know that it won't happen one corporation at a time, or without fundamental policy changes. America needs a strong counterbalance to the



Fighting the herd mentality: CWA President Morton Bahr

power of corporations—in the workplace, in the marketplace and in our policy-making arenas. And there's only one institution that can play that role—the American labor movement.

"Let's face it. Organizing just one work site, bargaining at just one work site or even shutting down just one work site just doesn't work anymore," says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. "The corporations we're dealing with no longer link their fortunes to their communities or even their country. If we're going to win a measure of justice from them, we need to organize. We need to develop corporatewide, industrywide, nationwide and even global strategies just to get their attention."

The Herd Mentality

We should not romanticize the past. After all, corporate greed is not a new invention. But much of the behavior we're seeing today was unthinkable decades ago, when the labor movement was stronger and corporate leaders were

WHEN CEOS TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

As waves of workers are turned out on the streets, America's captains of industry are feathering their nests with shockingly-high compensation packages.

Between 1980 and 1995, factory wages rose 70 percent, lagging well behind an 85 percent increase in consumer prices. Meanwhile, corporate profits jumped 145 percent. And executive pay skyrocketed a mind-boggling 499 percent.

For following the low road, CEOs are rewarded handsomely; the value of their own stock options and holdings soars when they pursue a path of downsizing and layoffs. A few examples:

- AT&T Chairman Robert Allen took in his highest pay package ever, \$15.9 million, when he announced 40,000 layoffs.
 - Boeing CEO Frank Shrontz earned \$5.9 million while laying off 23,000.
- American Home Products Corp. Chairman John R. Stafford scored a package of \$9.7 million, up 132 percent, while 4,000 layoffs were announced.
- And then there's Chain Saw Al, who in less than two years at Scott Paper kept \$100 million for himself while handing out pink slips to 11,000 workers.

According to the Institute for Policy Studies, the top 22 CEO job slashers in 1995 were rewarded with \$37 million—that's how much the value of their stocks and stock options rose—and that doesn't include their average annual pay of \$4.5 million. *Business Week* reported that executive salaries and bonuses jumped by 25 percent at the 20 companies with the largest announced layoffs.

With executive income increasingly tied to short-term performance, managers frequently take the money and run—all too often to another unfortunate company.

-David Kameras

far more sensitive to public image.

Take the case of the Pabst Brewing Co., which recently caused an uproar in Milwaukee with plans to leave its home of 152 years and put 500 workers out of jobs. After purchasing the Milwaukee brewery in the mid-1980s, S&P, a private investor group, followed its usual course described by beer historian Joe Owades as "milking a plant dry"—stripping down the operation, outsourcing and refusing to invest in marketing or equipment. Despite a fierce community outcry and sharp criticism from the mayor, governor, members of Congress and even U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich, "Pabst's answer was 'we don't need your money, and we don't owe your city or state anything," says UAW Local 9 President Jay Kopplin.

Years ago, there might have been a stigma attached to this kind of disregard for the community. Today, in a society where there are few countervailing forces, it's standard practice.

The more corporations get away with low-road behavior, the more it happens. This explains how the CEO's pay rose to an astounding 145 times that of the average worker's, compared with 41 times as much in 1980. Can anyone imagine that during, say, the 1950s or 1960s, the chairman of AT&T would have pocketed \$5 million in salary while announcing 40,000 layoffs? And that doesn't even include the value of stocks and stock options, which shot up when the downsizing was announced, and which represent an ever-increasing share of total CEO compensation.

Two years ago, the Communications Workers



COURTESY OF IAM

The Harley recovery: Machinists help engineer a turnaround

fought to break the herd mentality when Bell Atlantic gave nearly a million stock options to its CEO, Ray Smith. "Every time that happens, it sets a pattern. It becomes the standard for every other CEO in the industry," says George Kohl, CWA research director. "We brought it to the attention of our members, the public and large institutional investors, particularly those that manage workers' pension funds. But ultimately, to fight this successfully will take all of America rising up against it."

Several years earlier, Chrysler was planning to spin off its profitable Acustar components division for short-term financial gains. "A classic quick-fix, dumb idea," says UAW President Stephen P. Yokich. "Looking back, it's clear that we saved Chrysler from itself by successfully opposing the sale," he added. "Acustar has contributed significantly to Chrysler's profitability and provided thousands of good jobs."

But the Acustar episode wasn't the last time the UAW had to deal with short-termism at Chrysler. More recently, billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's takeover attempt threatened to divert funds from the corporation to its shareholders. "We argued that a company like Chrysler in a cycli-

THE TOP 22 JOB SLASHERS
STRIKE IT RICH IN 1995

NUMBER OF LAYOFFS ANNOUNCED BY 22 CEOs IN 1995 237,218

FOR DOWNSIZING, 22 CEOS
PROFITED FROM A HEFTY RISE IN
STOCK OPTION VALUE
\$36.6 MILLION

AND THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE THE AVERAGE ANNUAL CEO SALARY \$4.5 MILLION

Source: The Institute for Policy Studies

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some Corporate Executives



Have developed a taste For swallowing companies Factories and wavehouses.

one of them visits Atherapist.



He He High Com

He HAS NIGHTMARES.

BY NICOLE HOLLANDER



in which Hers visited by Angry Union Mc - Berg. Soon He can Horothy Lock At a Factory of The & Experience indigestion.

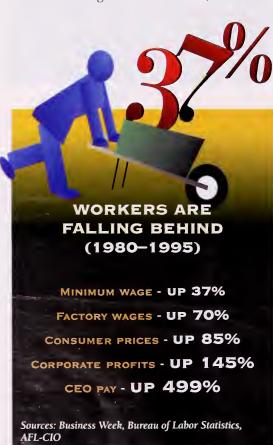
cal and volatile business needs cash reserves for downturns and for capital investments. And to their credit, Chrysler's management agreed with us," says Yokich. "Supported by the union, they resisted the takeover attempt and the company is doing better than ever."

Mounting evidence suggests that low-road practices, most notably downsizing, are bad and even fatal for a company's long-term health. Studies show that after massive layoffs, companies frequently underperform in their markets compared to their more stable competitors. In part, that's because downsizing drastically lowers morale among the workers who remain and destroys their commitment to the success of the business.

But with Wall Street constantly demanding short-term earnings boosts, executives continue to sacrifice the long-term interests of their corporations. "The more stock prices go up, the more imaginative managers have to be to make things go even higher," says Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.), a vocal critic of Wall Street's manipulations. "There is now a laundry list of corporations that have announced record profits and major layoffs simultaneously."

Changing the Rules

Against seemingly insurmountable odds, some unions do manage to push companies back onto the high road. Machinists, Auto



Workers, Electrical Workers, Laborers, Steelworkers and other union members have won a voice in workplace decisions, participated in plans for long-term business growth and made quality the basis for competing in the mar-

ket. And what they have found is that high-road practices are indeed profitable; they were the driving force behind the highly-visible turn-arounds engineered by Machinists and Paperworkers at Harley-Davidson and by Auto Workers at the Big Three automakers.

Often, employees rescue a company from short-term speculators by buying the companies themselves. That was the case at Republic Engineered Steel in Canton, Ohio, a company that in 1989 was bound and determined to sell off all of its assets. With a Wall Street speculator knocking at the door, 4,000 Steelworkers saved their jobs through an employee buyout. Seven years later, the worker-owned company—one of hundreds around the country today—is thriving still.

But such examples are islands in the storm. Realistically, we can't expect to get America back on the high road without changing the rules of the game. And the only way we'll get new rules is by rebuilding the labor movement and restoring the balance of power.

"We have to find ways to get companies to act in a more responsible way," says Blackwell, who heads up the AFL-CIO's new Department of Corporate Affairs, created to develop new strategies and policy changes that give workers a voice in the economy. "Policies that benefit only a small minority of shareholders are not sustainable—economically or socially. We want businesses to prosper, and to maximize long-term shareholder value, but in ways that benefit all stakeholders. We'll work with companies willing to travel the high road, but we'll fight those pursuing low-road strategies."

On one front, the AFL-CIO is working toward a plan to make more strategic use of labor's cash flow, financial assets, pension funds and other capital resources. "Right now, we are letting much of corporate America use our own money against us," says Trumka. "And if we don't find ways to correct the situation, our investment capital will continue to flow overseas in search of low wages, destroying our members' jobs and our livelihoods."

At the same time, the labor movement will



RICK FREEDMAN

For sale: Biddeford workers look for a high-road buyer

mobilize working families around an agenda to reverse public policies that exacerbate the power imbalance. That means fighting for:

- *Economic growth*. To accommodate financial markets, the U.S. government, primarily through the Federal Reserve, restrains economic growth. The result is chronically slack labor markets, which reduce workers' bargaining power.
- Fair trade, not "free" trade. As a result of free trade policies, including NAFTA, corporations are free to put high-wage workers in the United States in direct competition with low-wage labor in other countries—further eroding workers' power and living standards.
- Fair taxes. The shifting of the tax and regulatory burden away from corporations and the promotion of balanced-budget initiatives have served mainly to destroy good jobs, in both the public and private sectors. Our nation should do away with the tax incentives and forms of corporate welfare that undermine working families.
- Workers' rights. The decline of the labor movement has contributed more than any other single factor to the deterioration of middle-class living standards. As a matter of policy, workers' rights to join unions to improve their lives should not be superseded by employers' desire for "labor market flexibility."

"When working people have more power in our society, we can help American business bring out the best in itself," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "Too many business people want to take the high road, but have been forced to take the low road by cutthroat competition at home and abroad. Together, we can replace the law of the jungle with the rule of reason."

In the meantime, UNITE members in Biddeford have joined local and state officials on a task force seeking to keep their plant and jobs in Maine. Travelers in the state shouldn't be surprised to see a sign outside the red brick building that reads "WANTED: High-road buyer."

Who's new, what's at stake and how we can hold the next Congress accountable to working families

Inside the



Orange County changes: Loretta Sanchez wins close race

Tond of the second of the seco

he new Congress that will convene later this month is quite different from the last one. In part, that's because there will be 74 new faces (42 Democrats and 32 Republicans) in the U.S. House of Representatives. But even more important, the 105th Congress is looking at issues in a whole new light.

By all accounts, the so-called "contract with America" is gone, rejected by millions of voters outraged by the assaults on their living and working standards, retirement security and educational opportunities. True, Newt Gingrich is returning, but with fewer supporters and a slimmer Republican majority. And while he and his right-wing colleagues are expected to lead a devious agenda to cut vital programs such as Medicare and Social Security, bestow tax breaks on the wealthy and weaken workers' rights and labor protections, their extremist vendetta has been dulled.

Last year, the AFL-CIO's Labor '96 campaign forced many members of Congress to abandon the Gingrich "revolution." By exposing congressional votes against working families and by educating and mobilizing union members around key issues, the labor movement shifted the debate. Backpedal-

ing as fast as they could, some of the most conservative Republicans in the end voted for an increase in the minimum wage and a health-care reform bill to preserve coverage for workers who lose or change jobs.

Now, as they take their seats on Capitol Hill, the issues on the front burner will be quality education, affordable health care, retirement security and other working family issues—and Gingrich himself feels compelled to say he favors "bipartisan" solutions.

The AFL-CIO will lead an "American Working Families Agenda." But the battles ahead won't be won or lost in Washington. The backbone of Labor '96 was grassroots action—and it will be in home districts that grassroots activism will make the difference during the upcoming session of Congress.

Rep. Jim Maloney: Freshman from Connecticut



January 1997 15



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Siding with working families: Newly-elected Julia Carson

THE FACES OF CHANGE

No newly-elected member of Congress better reflects the changing face of electoral politics than Loretta Sanchez (D). The daughter of Mexican immigrants in Orange County, Sanchez won election in California's 46th congressional district by such a narrow margin that her anti-worker opponent, Republican Bob Dornan, refused to concede defeat. But Sanchez—who as a strong supporter of job safety, tax fairness and a living wage was backed enthusiastically by union members—is indeed heading to Washington for a seat in the Congress.

"There was a real change in the electorate," says Bill Fogarty, secretary-treasurer of the central labor council in Orange County, an area traditionally known for its conservative Republican stranglehold. "We turned out over 1,200 volunteers, Democrats and Republicans alike."

Other newly-elected members of Congress who won with an outpouring of union support are also in the spotlight:

- Walter Capps (D) won in California's 22nd congressional district with a campaign based on jobs with decent wages, quality schools, affordable health care and financial security for senior citizens. His defeated opponent, incumbent Andrea Seastrand (R), had led a march on AFL-CIO headquarters last year to protest the "big labor bosses" support of a minimum wage increase and voted for a bill that put the 40-hour week in jeopardy. On Election Day, she was marched out of office.
- Carolyn McCarthy (D) from Long Island sent incumbent Rep. Daniel Frisa (R) packing by pledging to make pension protection a top priority and to promote tax fairness for working families, safe communities, good schools and job training.
- Connecticut voters retired incumbent Gary Franks (R) in favor of Jim Maloney (D). Maloney called for creating decent jobs and ending corporate welfare policies. By comparison,

Franks sported an 8 percent voting record on working family issues.

- In Indiana's 10th congressional district, Democrat Julia Carson defeated Republican Virginia Blankenbaker for a seat in Congress. Carson is an African-American woman whose career began with a local Auto Workers union.
- In a run-off election in Texas' 9th congressional district, Democrat Nick Lampson defeated incumbent Republican Steve Stockman. A former schoolteacher, Lampson is known for his strong commitment to education.

All told, 56 candidates in Labor '96-targeted races won in the House and Senate. More importantly, voters tossed out 18 of what AFL-CIO President John Sweeney called the "ugliest Americans ever to serve in Congress"—reducing the margin of Gingrich supporters in the House.

Perhaps that's why the once bombastic Gingrich supported health insurance portability and the minimum wage increase during the final days of the campaign. But it remains to be seen how real this death-bed conversion is, or whether Gingrich and other conservative incumbents are only seeking bipartisanship to advance a pro-business agenda.

"That's why it is so important to put our working families agenda before the public," says Sweeney, "and to crystalize public awareness as we did last year on issues like the minimum wage."

A WORKING FAMILIES AGENDA

Last year, under the banner "America Needs A Raise," AFL-CIO unions brought the growing wage and wealth gap to the forefront and set the stage for a campaign for an American Working Families Agenda (see page 17), a grassroots and policy initiative recently issued by the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

Here's a look at the issues at stake for working families in the year ahead.

• Good Jobs, Secure Families. Last year, congressional attempts to destroy the 40-hour week, the Davis-Bacon Act and workplace safety laws—and promote the company-union TEAM Act—went down in defeat. This year, unions will go on the offensive with a fight to protect and improve wage and benefit standards, such as by pushing for extended family and medical leave benefits.

Most importantly, the labor movement will fight to restore the real rights of working Americans to improve their lives by joining unions and to hold employers to high standards of accountability and responsibility.

One issue that stands to have a major impact on wages, and which could surface as a matter for Congress to resolve, is a proposal to revise the Consumer Price Index. A commission headed by former Bush adviser Michael Boskin recently concluded that the CPI overstates the rate of inflation—and recommended a new inflation yardstick, one which would reduce wage increases and other payments tied to the cost of living. The proposal is being criticized by many experts and economists.

- Education. With education ranking as one of the most important issues on the minds of working Americans, last year's Labor '96 campaign helped quell the right-wing clamor to abolish the Department of Education. But we can expect a continued conservative push for vouchers—both for education and job training—which drain funding for public school systems. Also likely is a fight over higher education loan reauthorization, which is due for a vote in this session of Congress. The AFL-CIO will push to increase access to quality education and job training programs.
- Health Care. The Kennedy-Kassebaum bill passed last year was an important step toward increasing health coverage for unemployed workers. But today, 40 million Americans—10 million of whom are children—still lack affordable care. Access to health care remains a top priority for the labor movement.

Predictably, conservatives promise a fight. Perhaps the biggest health-care fight will center on Medicare and how to correct short-term problems and shore up the program for the long term. But following last year's education and mobilization by the Labor '96 campaign, polls show that voters will not sit still for a dismantling of the Medicare system.

• Social Security and Pensions. After a bruising fight last year stopped legislation that would have encouraged corporate raids on pension funds, workers will be keeping a wary eye open for similar proposals this term. They will also push for measures to allow workers to carry pensions from one job to another.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Ousting Seastrand: Walter Capps goes to Washington

American Working Families Agenda

A Grassroots and Policy Initiative

orking Americans are the backbone of our country, and we deserve to live and work in dignity, to be able to provide for our families and to give our children a chance for a better future. We also deserve to have our government respect and stand with us, not with the wealthy special interests who would sacrifice our families and weaken our communities in pursuit of greater profits and wealth. On behalf of all of America's working families, the AFL-CIO and its mem-

ber unions will organize and mobilize to advance a working families agenda and to hold elected officials at every level of government accountable to protect and pro-

mote the interests of workers and our families.

• Good Jobs, Secure Families

Our families are more secure and our communities healthier when every American has a chance at a decent job. We will fight for jobs that allow time for family responsibilities and help with child and elder care. We will advance policies that promote job growth, good wage standards, safe jobs and non-discrimination. We will support policies that hold

growth, good wage standards, safe jobs and non-discrimination.

We will support policies that hold employers to high standards of accountability and ensure the rights of Americans to improve their lives by forming or joining unions. And we will work for fair benefits for every job—whether full-time, part-time or contract.

• Education

Every child should be able to get a good start in life through a quality education and every worker should have the ability to fully develop his or her skills. We will support safe, quality education, the promise of a better future through affordable and available opportunities for higher education and strong job training programs for working women and men.

• Health Care

In the richest nation in the world, no person—employed or unemployed—no adult, no child should go without the health care they need. We will fight to

Increase voter rights and participation, recruit candidates

Hold elected leaders accountable through activism around issues

protect quality health programs for the elderly and the poor as well as for affordable, accessible

health care for workers and their families.

Inform,
educate and
mobilize
working
families for
national issue
debates

Social Security and Pensions

Every American deserves to look forward to a satisfying and secure retirement, and no system in the world has been more successful than our system of social insurance and private pensions. We will resist Wall Street schemes to pillage Social Security while working to strengthen it for current and future genera-

tions, and we will advance initiatives to protect and expand private pension benefits.

Renew ties with community allies around a shared agenda

• Fair Tax, Trade and Economic Policies

We will work for a tax system that is fair to working Americans, with every individual and enterprise paying their fair share. We will

fight to end tax subsidies for corporations sending American jobs overseas. We will fight for respect for worker rights in trade policies and against practices that disadvantage American workers. And we will support policies and budget priorities that promote greater economic growth, create more jobs, restrict profiteering off public programs, protect consumers and guarantee every American the opportunity to participate in a shared economy.

But, along with Medicare, the hottest public debate may center on Social Security and Wall Street schemes to privatize it. While actual legislative proposals aren't likely this term, the issue will come down to a choice between cutting Social Security benefits to the bone or creating good jobs and a growth economy that can continue to finance the program.

• Fair Tax, Trade and Economic Policies. The key to achieving real improvements in working families' living standards is restoring fairness to the nation's tax, trade and economic policies. While working families shoulder more and more of the tax burden, for example, the corporate share of the federal income tax burden is tiny—only 9 percent of revenues in 1993, compared to 31 percent in 1953. Worst of all, corporations get major tax breaks for exporting or destroying American jobs.

The AFL-CIO working families agenda calls for lessening the tax burden on working families, putting an end to corporate welfare policies and supporting policies and budget priorities that promote economic growth and shared prosperity. In addition, at a time when Chinese membership in the World Trade Organization and fast-track negotiating authority will be issues in the new Congress, the AFL-CIO will call for stronger worker protections in trade agreements to ensure that increased trade does not undercut workers' living standards.

To advance the working families' agenda, the AFL-CIO and its member unions are following up on Labor '96 with a broad, coordinated

campaign to build a permanent grassroots action infrastructure that will hold elected leaders accountable to working families.

FOLLOWING UP WITH GRASSROOTS ACTION

More than a dozen union activists in Indianapolis recently convened a meeting with newly-elected Rep. Julia Carson. "We spent a lot of time talking about organizing—how the laws are screwed up and how the Board (NLRB) needs more funding," explains Jerry Payne, secretary-treasurer of the Indiana AFL-CIO.

Such face-to-face meetings are taking place in roughly 150 congressional districts, primarily with members of Congress who are first-termers or moderates from either party, to focus on the economic problems working families face—and the hardships they endure when trying to organize.

"We've got to get in to see all of our elected officials, Democrats and Republicans, to make sure they have a good understanding of what it's like to be a family that works for a living," says Ted Murphree, president of the Central Arizona Labor Council.

By putting workers directly in touch with their representatives in Congress, the meetings are establishing important two-way communication pathways. They give members of Congress a chance to see and hear firsthand the issues that concern working families. They let elected leaders know that working families are watching their votes. They educate and mobilize union members who will carry the infor-



New face from Long Island: Rep. Carolyn McCarthy

mation back to family members, co-workers, retirees and others in their communities. And they set the stage for organizing a permanent base of worker and community activists who will deliver direct feedback to members of Congress in their home districts.

"The last Congress was just so bad with their ridiculous proposals to cut OSHA, Medicare, and student loans that members are much more active and issue-conscious as we move into the next Congress," says James Andrews, secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina AFL-CIO. "They're ready to act as a watchdog to see if those kinds of issues surface again."

The state fed recently invited every union member who signed a Labor '96 volunteer pledge card last year to a meeting with newly-elected Reps. David Price and Bob Etheridge. It also is reaching out to community groups to broaden support for the working families' agenda.

"Because of what House Republicans almost got away with, there's been much more interest among our members about what's happening in Congress," says Ken Morgan of the Maine AFL-CIO. Last year, union members in Maine's 1st congressional district mobilized to help defeat Jim Longley, a Republican incumbent with a dismal record.

"Now, to hold elected leaders accountable and push a working family agenda," says Morgan, "we've got to extend the campaign phase of '96—and keep the apparatus, enthusiasm and activity going."

Set up a meeting with your member of Congress today! If you'd like to know how you can get involved in the grassroots campaign to hold elected leaders accountable, call Suzanne Granville at 202-637-5357.

Building and Changing the Movement

New initiatives from the AFL-CIO Executive Council

To set the tone for the labor movement's grassroots legislative and political organizing work this year, the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued the "American Working Families Agenda" at its mid-December meeting in Washington, D.C. The agenda is one of many new AFL-CIO initiatives designed to build and change the American labor movement through organizing, political mobilization, establishing a new voice for workers in the changing economy and building community coalitions. Among them:

- Union Summer '97, an extension of last year's highly successful internship program and a new youth program called the Justice Action Movement (JAM).
 - Working Women Organize, a nationwide program to reach out to working women.
- Union Cities, a program challenging local unions and central labor councils to undertake major changes to support organizing, political action, coalition-building and other strategic goals of the labor movement.
- Economics Education to provide working families with an understanding of the new global economy and inspire support for organizing and political action.
- Building public support for the right of workers to organize to improve their lives.
- Expanding support and funding for strategic and cooperative organizing campaigns, the "changing to organize" program and other organizing initiatives.
- Grassroots issues-based political and legislative organizing and media campaigns.
- Providing a new voice for workers through capital strategies, corporate accountability and global organizing and bargaining projects.

You'll see more more details on these and other new program initiatives in future issues of America@Work.

An Organizer's Odyssey

When she was fired for union activities, Marta Flores-Ramirez knew at last the job she really wanted

s the daughter of strident community activists in a small Honduran town, Marta Flores-Ramirez' early perception was that organizing "was for old people." But today, the 32-year-old organizer's commitment to her chosen vocation could not be stronger. To the staff member of Service Employees Local 715 in San Jose, nothing is more gratifying than when you "create a relationship between workers, and they know you are with them and they trust you."

Flores-Ramirez' odyssey from Central America to the Bay Area included a stay in a shelter for homeless women, volunteer work with people with AIDS and recent immigrants, a job with Sprint—from which she was fired for union activities—training at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and, at long last, a job "I really want to do."

She learned early in life "how people can come together and change things," she says. "In the little town where I lived, we didn't have water all day, or a school where you could go and study without having to pay." But her parents organized community activist groups and prodded the local government and businesses until needed improvements were made.

When Flores-Ramirez and her two-year-old

son set out for the United States in 1991, she spoke only Spanish, so "there weren't many things I could do," she recalls. She was referred to the San Francisco Women's Shelter and then to Eng-

lish classes—way stations that opened the door to the Bay Area's famous activist community.

"The Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services offered training to be a community leader, to let immigrant women and others know about their rights," she says. The training prompted her to volunteer for several groups.

But volunteer work doesn't pay the bills, so Flores-Ramirez ended up as a telemarketer at Sprint, selling the nonunion phone company's service to the Hispanic community. She was so good that the company that trained Sprint's Spanish-speaking telemarketers hired her as a trainer.

She decided to apply for a new position with Sprint. But despite her background as a trainer, the company told her she "didn't have the experi-

HEART of the Movement

ence," she says.
"They just put the people they liked in the good jobs." And when she spoke out against Sprint's deportation threats against immigrant workers, the bosses told her she was out of line.

Harassment followed. Then they fired her.

When a friend recommended that she talk to a union, Flores-Ramirez was initially reluctant. "I said, 'What's a union?' He said, 'It's a *sindicato*.' In Honduras, people who worked for the *sindicato* were murdered for their union activities!"

Her friend assured her that while it's tough for union activists here, too, it's not *that* tough. Flores-Ramirez contacted Communications Workers Local 9410 and was hired for the union's organizing drive at Sprint.

As a former co-worker, she could get people to listen. "She has a rare quality for someone new to organizing," says Virginia Rodriguez-Jones, CWA District 9 organizing director. "She was able to establish a tremendous kinship, bonding and loyalty with the workers."

"Sprint knew we were really organized," Flores-Ramirez says, "and that's why they closed down (the Spanish telemarketing operation) a week before the union election." It was to have taken place on July 14, 1994.

The Sprint campaign ended, but Flores-Ramirez was far from discouraged. In fact, the experience made her realize what she wanted most. She signed up for a three-week Organizing Institute internship in Tennessee, and then took a job with SEIU Local 715, where she has worked on several organizing efforts, particularly among area home health-care workers.

When she first talks to workers, she says, "they think they can't do this. But I help them see that they can win. They get involved and start believing." Maybe that's because the message comes from a true believer.

-- Mike Hall

True believer: Marta Flores-Romirez (left) with home health-care worker Rosa Figueroa

Office



Art Works

he Chicago Federation of Labor forged new links with the community by sponsoring "Union Images," a competition featuring original works by local artists. The art was displayed in the state office building for five days, garnering considerable press and public attention. The winning piece, Si Podemos by Kathleen Farrell, graphically displays the horrendous working conditions in poultry plants. The artist was inspired by the Laborers' struggle to organize the mostly Latino workers at Case Farms in North Carolina.

GOT A CLEVER IDEA YOU'D

Give us a call or send us a letter, fax, or e-mail to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Phone: 202-637-5010 Fax: 202-508-6908

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve. com Internet: http://www.aflcio.org

COMING BACK WITH

If you want to own one of the snazzy "Comet" pins produced by Operating Engineers Local 3, you'll have to take a course in organizing first. The pins are given to workers who've been through the first phase of a program that raises members' awareness about the need to organize and then teaches them the insand-outs of salting.

Local 3 in Alameda County, Calif., is one of several Operating Engineers locals—and other building trades unions—that have launched Comet programs as a way to return to grassroots organizing. "For years, many building trades unions were organizing top-down, through the contractors," says Local 3's Steve Moler. "



"Now we're going back to the grass roots and getting members involved."

The Local 3 program has only been in place for one year, but already 800 members are wearing the Comet pins.

For more information on Comet programs, call Bob Ozinga at the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department at 202-347-1461.

PUB DOS EMBARRASSMENT

"Women don't shop where women can't work with dignity."

hat's the message from the Food and Commercial Workers and the National Committee for Pay Equity to Publix, the nation's sixth-largest grocery chain, as part of a campaign to connect women as consumers with women as workers.

A class-action suit brought against the Florida-based supermarket, on behalf of 100,000 female workers in three states, charges that the grocer has denied women promotions to store management positions and has tracked and trapped women in the lowest-paying jobs—for instance, not hiring women as stockers, because that position is on the store management track.

In 1994, the UFCW and Pay Equity launched a "Women's Action Campaign" to advise workers of their right to equal opportunity.

The campaign includes picketing and leafleting at Publix markets, and the union hopes to take it beyond the chain.

For more information, call Greg Denier at the UFCW at 202-328-5400.



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One hundred thousand women are potentially one thought thousand thousand women are potentially women by not shopping at Pu

Women Don't Shop Where Women Can't Work with

DON'T SHOP PUBLIX



laking It to the Streets

Sometimes it matters less WHAT you do than WHERE you do it.

onsider, for example, the HERE Local 11 hotel employees fighting for a contract who drew attention to their workloads by speedily making up beds. That doesn't sound too dramatic, until you realize that the demonstration—complete with bed, linen and pillows-took place on the traffic-snarled streets of downtown Los Angeles.

From mock courtroom hearings to costume parades to sit-ins, more and more unions are taking to the

streets with their campaigns for justice. One noteworthy action took place on the streets of San Francisco last year, when SEIU nursing home workers dressed up as their favorite villains (the governor of California and the CEO of the nation's second largest nursing home chain) jumped onto a makeshift bed and began counting piles of play money. The protest temporarily blocked traffic and resulted in 38 arrestsand drew widespread attention to corporate greed in the nursing home industry.

Look BEFORE You Buy

launch an ad campaign calling on shoppers to buy and wear the union label than the day after Thanksgiving-the official start of the holiday gift buying season and one of the busiest shopping days of the year. That's when UNITE ads ran in newspapers and magazines around the country, including The New York Times, Washington Post, Women's Wear Daily and New Republic.

The two-week campaign urged consumers who care about "basic human rights, dignity and child labor" to get dressed "in clothes that bear this UNITE label." UNITE workers, the ad said, "make the best clothes in the world and they want you to wear their stuff. Or nothing."

Copies of the ads are available to use as posters. Contact UNITE's Communications Department at 212-265-7000. @

You're naked without hat better day to

Wear what you believe UNITE

SEEING THE LIGHT

hen Yale University threatened to tear down any banners hung by the union during a December demonstration, HERE members came up with a creative



alternative. They used bolo lights to project their messages on the facade of Woolsey Hall: "Save decent jobs at Yale, take a stand. The 3,700 university workers represented by Locals 34 and 35 had been working without a contract for nearly a year. They reached a settlement just days after the protest (see page 5). 🖾

STRANGER DANGER

eamsters Local 96 is warning customers and union members in the Washington, D.C. area about the dangerous strangers lurking in their neighborhoods. Ever since the Washington Gas Co. locked out 1,000 Teamsters, and then returned them to work without a union contract, the natural gas utility has been "sending in the clowns"-contracting out union work to disreputable contractors. In at least one instance, a contractor's sloppy work was responsible for a gas explosion in a Virginia suburb-prompting the union to come up with a banner that read "Burn Gas, Not Consumers." Through mass mailings, the union is asking for help in their campaign against subcontracting and consumer hazards. For information, call Local 96 at 202-293-4333.



On a Mission to Mobilize Membera

One steward's quest to involve people of color in the union



nion stewards and activists are on the firing line every day as they try to solve difficult workplace problems, but their toughest challenge may not be taking on the boss so much as getting workers involved in their union. And that's particularly true among workers of color who do not always feel connected to the larger community.

One unionist who is meeting the challenge head on is Larry Blackstone of Communica-

tions Workers Local 7400 in Omaha, Neb. As chairman of the union's equity committee at USWest and a local leader in the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), Blackstone is making it his mission to encourage people of color to take an active role in their union.

"For a long time, we stayed out of the hall, even while we paid our dues," says Blackstone. "But when restructuring hits, these are the people who are the first to be let go."

To promote activism among people of color, Blackstone's local is inviting workers to take leave from the shop floor to attend minority leadership conferences sponsored by their international

One such conference was held last August at the George Meany ies in Silver Spring, Md., where telecommunications workers from across the country gathered for three weeks to learn about legislative and workplace issues and develop their skills in areas such as public speaking and negotiatfeatured a session on labor history, which Blackstone says reinforced the message that when different groups join together and stand united, they become more powerful.

The union pays lost

wages to participating members, who are then asked to share information from the conference with other union members at shop floor meetings.

According to Blackstone, the minority leadership conferences are "getting peoplesome of whom I've never even seen before to come to union meetings."

"Many African-Americans and Hispanics have not had the luxury of being in a union," he says. "They don't feel like we

> should get more involved in the communities where minority workers live. He suggests using stone soul picnics-or block parties in African-American neighborhoods—as a way to increase labor's profile in the community. "We could have lots of balloons and other items to give

Blackstone also is encouraging the APRI to get involved with programs such as the Young Ambassadors, which helps kids through counseling and recreation. "It's tough to get people involved in the union if there's nothing going on," he says.

Center for Labor Studing. The conference also

"Many African-

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Hispanics have

not had the luxury

of being in a

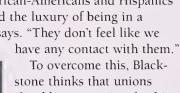
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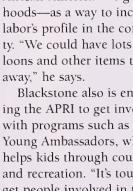
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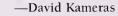
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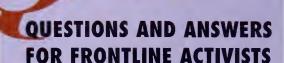
with them."

-Larry Blackstone









Q. We are preparing for negotiations and need to thoroughly research the company. Got any tips on how to go about it?

A: If your company is a public company, you should bookmark these links on your World Wide Web browser:

SEC Financial Doc-

uments at http://edgar. stern.nyu.edu.

- Public Companies with Financial Information at http://www.csn.net/natcorp/traded.
- Hoovers Company Information at http:// hoovers.com.
- Wall Street Journal Interactive at http:// wsj.com.

If your company is privately held, these are a few links that could get you started:

- Editor and Publisher at http://www. mediainfo.com.
 - Newslink at http://www.newslink.org.
- Dun and Bradstreet at http://dbisna.com. If you are looking for information relating to your company, you can use a search engine: http://yahoo.com or http:/www.altavista.com.

Q. Our union contract allows employees to toke 16 weeks off to care for a newborn child. In bargaining, our employer is proposing that leave be cut back to 12 weeks, the time allowed in the Family and Medical Leave Act. How can we respond?

A: Your union can fight to keep the 16-week benefit. The FMLA is a floor, not a ceiling. Collective bargaining agreements can provide for more generous leave policies than the federal law requires. You could also take this opportunity to try to further expand FMLA protections

under your contract. For example, you could seek to require that the employer continue life and disability insurance during family leave, or allow new parents to reduce their schedules to one-half time or three-quarters time rather than take the 16 weeks of leave all at once.

The FMLA allows 12 weeks of leave for your own serious health condition, or to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent. During contract negotiations, you could ask your employer not to force employees to use up vacation or sick time before taking FMLA leave, and to allow them to use leave to care for a sick grandparent or parent-in-law.

Got a question? Drop us a line, post us a message or pick up the phone, and we'll try to find the answer. Write us at 815 16th St. NW, Room 402, Washington, D.C. 20006; E-mail to 71112.53@ compuserve.com; or call 202-637-5010.

BACK TO SCHOOL

- The University of Massachusetts Amherst, in association with the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, offers a master's degree program in labor studies with 10-day summer and winter sessions to accommodate the schedules of full-time working people. Emphasis is on union leadership, organizational development and administration. Applications are due March 1. Contact the Union Leadership and Administration Master's Program, Labor Relations and Research Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 125 Draper Hall, Amherst, Mass. 01003; or call 413-545-4875.
- Enhance your union skills this winter with a class or two at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. The Winter Semester 1997 will offer courses on organizing, arbitration, news writing and editing, negotiating first contracts and the Internet, among other choices. For more information, contact the center, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903; or call 301-431-5422.

NEW RESOURCES

 On Target is an hour-long quarterly audio magazine that provides the latest organizing

strategies, with candid comments from organizers, leaders, activists and members. One-year subscriptions are \$24; multiple subscriptions of five or more are \$20 each. Contact the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903; or call 301-431-6400.

• A new study, Caring for our Children: Labor's Role in Human Services Reform, shows why public service managers need to involve workers in reform efforts. The authors, Laura Ginsburg of the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department

and Marcia Calicchia of Cornell University, found five examples of model programs. Copies are \$4 each. Contact the PED at 202-393-3820.

• It's that time of year. Unions can help spread the word about the Earned Income Credit, an important tax benefit for work-

ing families. To help publicize the benefits and this year's changes in eligibility, the AFL-CIO has distributed Earned Income Credit campaign kits to its state feds, CLCs and international union affiliates. For information, call Alan Bosch at 202-637-5193.

• Errata: The telephone number for the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute was listed incorrectly in the November/December issue. The correct phone number is 202-638-3912.

MOVING PICTURES

• A new half-hour documentary from the Bread and Roses Cultural Project tells the story of Latina women in the United States through 12 unusual women whose lives and achievements broke new ground. The women portrayed in "Women of Hope: Latinas Abriendo Camino (Latinas Breaking New Ground)" include Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.) and actress Miriam Colon.

The video features a rich soundtrack of diverse Latin music, including the original theme song "Mujer Latina," an infectious Salsa-Cumbia mix written and recorded for the documentary. The video is being shown on television stations in several cities (check local listings) and is available, along with

posters and a companion study guide, from Bread and Roses—the cultural arm of 1199 National Health and Human Services Employees Union. Call 212-631-4565 for more information.



WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S NEW

Local and regional union leaders across the country may already have noticed some changes in the AFL-CIO's field operations. That's because the Department of Field Mobilization, the activist arm of the federation, is undergoing a reorganization that will bring many programs to support organizing, political action and coalition-building under one umbrella. "We're developing one coordinated program in the field—one that captures new energy and ideas, promotes organizing and strengthens the labor movement," says Field Mobilization Director Marilyn Sneiderman.

Toward that end, the number of AFL-CIO regional offices has been reduced from 12 to four, directed as follows: Eastern Region, Director José Alvarez and Deputy Director Merrilee Milstein; Midwest Region, Director Mary Fears Crayton and Deputy Director Bruce Colburn; Southern Region, Director Kirk Adams and Deputy Director Ken Johnson; and Western Region, Director Mark Splain and Deputy Director Pat Lee.

In addition, state directors within each region will help coordinate the federation's organizing and political efforts.

A centerpiece of the new Field Mobilization program is a newly-launched "Union Cities" program designed to encourage communitywide organizing and political action through central labor councils.

On the political and legislative action front, the Department of Field Mobilization—which now includes the former COPE field staff—will coordinate grassroots action with the Legislative and Political Departments and work closely with state feds and local labor councils.

The Community Services Department has been integrated into Field Mobilization to bolster the federation's coalition-building and increase labor presence in the community. And a new Field Mobilization strategic campaigns team will work hand in hand with the Organizing and Corporate Affairs Department mobilize support for organizing drives, contract fights and strikes.

-- Mike Hall



Here's the way to Union C

• s your union ready to do its share to build a strong labor movement? Are you willing to join with other unions to make your community a L better place for families to live and work? If so, your hometown could become a "Union City"—and be a part of a new AFL-CIO program that supports unions working together through central labor councils to organize, mobilize members, form grassroots political action networks and build community coalitions. Union City Charter

Changing to Organize Mobilizing Members for

Solidarity Action

Building Grassroots

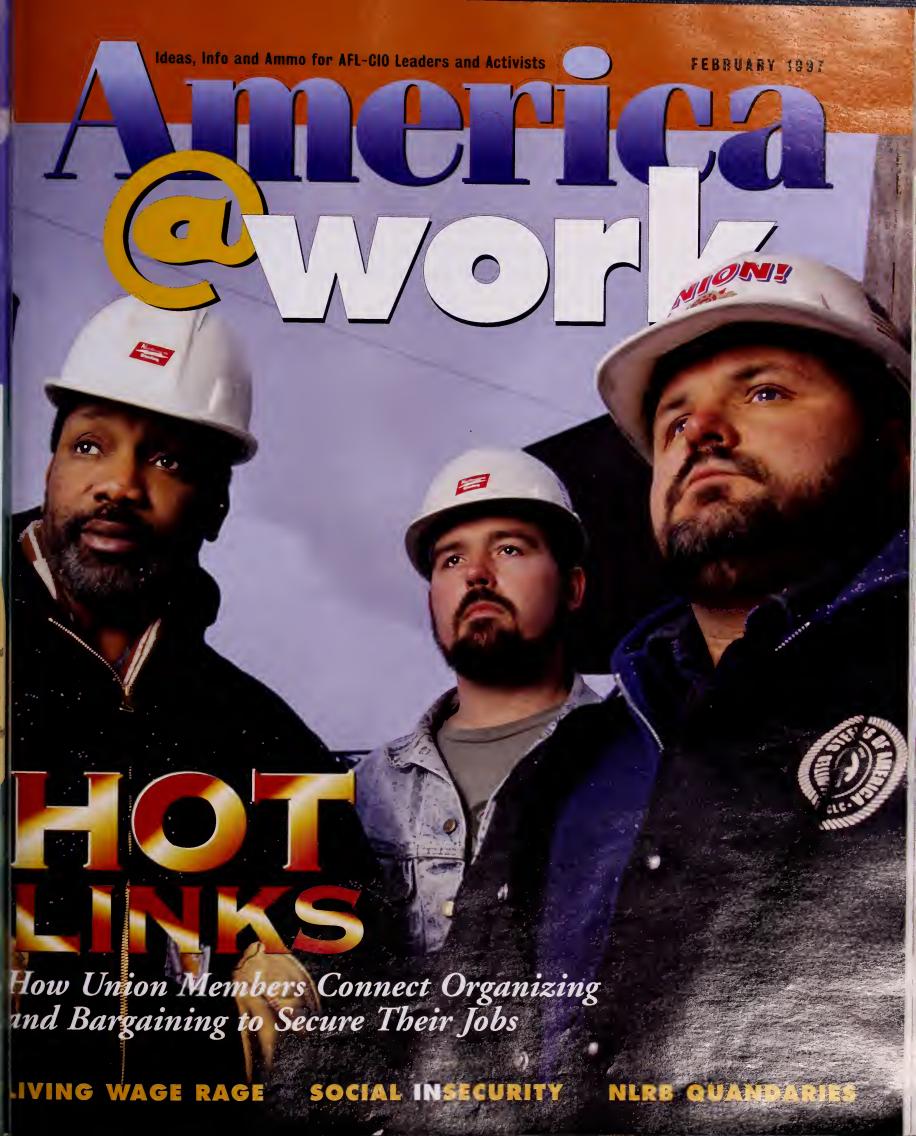
Political Networks Reaching Out in the

Pass a resolution in your central labor council.

Form a Union City committee in your local labor community.

Work with your state AFL-CIO field director on a Union City action plan.

Community But you have to act fast! Communities that have become Union City candidates will be announced next month. For more information, contact your CLC or call the AFL-CIO at 202-637-5041.





Ideas and Views From You



POLITICAL BACKTALK

On't let anyone tell you that labor's money was misspent in the recent elections. The fact that the Republicans were squealing about labor having the audacity to play their game is evidence enough that we are leveling the playing field, at least to a degree.—Joe Kavin, retired,

Despite the real gains labor helped make possible in the House (Nov./Dec. issue), we had every right to expect more for the bucks. Too much was spent early, so the Republicans used our involvement as the bogey-man around which they rallied their loyalists and fat-cat contributors. As the saying goes, "The nail that sticks up is the one that gets hammered."

—Thomas A. Thompson, UAW Local 975, Lima, Ohio. (abor '96 was the most successful campaign by organized labor in my lifetime. Look at Maine: we beat Republican Rep. Jim Longley, put in Democrats Tom Allen and John Baldacci and recaptured the state House and Senate. Continue the campaign against politicians who vote against us. Next time, spend more.—John Griffin, New England States Organizer, U.A.

Shame on the Republican Party's hypocrisy when they complain about labor unions contributing to Democratic Party candidates. At least the unions met in public conventions to discuss political contributions. As shareholders, we

resent having our money spent to support the re-election of U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms.—Carl Lamanna and Howard A. Schneider, stockholders of corporations listed as contributors to the Republican Party, Chapel Hill, N.C.



(a) As a Canadian law student, I'd like to add my voice to the call for a labor solidarity march in support of the striking Detroit Free Press workers. If this strike goes on much longer, "winning" for the union may be meaningless as members are forced to leave to survive. If ever there was a time for a large-scale show of solidarity, these people need it now.—Richard Warman, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

(a) The HERE California Travel Advisory Web site (Nov./Dec. issue) address has changed to http://www.herecal.com. By the way, the four California hotels now under boycott are the Sir Francis Drake in San Francisco, the New Otani in Los Angeles, the Monterey Plaza in Monterey and the Lafayette Park in Lafayette.—Faith Raider, HERE Local 2, San Francisco.

ORGANIZE WORKFARE

(a) I hope we'll see more articles on one of our biggest challenges: the welfare reform legislation authored by a Republican Congress and signed by a Democratic President. Not only must the damage done to the living standards of poor people be reversed, but those on workfare must be organized and brought up to the same standards as other workers. It shouldn't matter whether they have legal protections to organize. In the great campaigns of the past, workers organized and the law changed. We must address this issue more vigorously.—Ken Nash, AFSCME Dist. 37, New York.

When you see unions@work,

our

members@work,

and collective power

in our

communities@work,

that's when you see



What's your point of view?

Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010.

Fax: 202-508-6908.

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com. Internet: http://www.aflcio.org.



HIGH ROAD, LOW RETURNS?

(a) I have a modest IRA and have resisted investing in Wall Street for the reasons the article "Chain Saw Reactions" (Jan. issue) calls the "low road." But while I try to keep in mind that profits aren't everything, it bothers me to hear that acquaintances are getting higher returns on their low-road investments. Thirty years ago, buying stock was only for rich people; now more people are leveraging their savings for retirement through aggressive mutual funds. As the trend grows, it will be harder to maintain support for "high road" values if low-road investments mean more profits for stockholders and better return on savings. I go out of my way to buy union, as a statement of commitment to organized labor. But how much reduction in retirement security can people afford in the name of community and labor values?—Dave Rodriguez, AFGE and OPEIU, Washington, DC.



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guranis

A Spring March for Strawberry Workers

s strawberries ripen in the California fields this spring, the labor movement will focus national attention on the injustice and indignities suffered by the workers who bring in the crops.

A massive protest march planned for April 13 in Watsonville promises to be a high point in one of the largest organizing drives in the country, launched six months ago by the Farm Workers and the AFL-CIO.

Nearly 20,000 workers are struggling to end decades of exploitation in the fields, where the typical worker spends as many as 12 hours a day

> stooped over the low berry plants. Strawberry workers are fighting for such basic protections as clean drinking water, sanitary bathrooms, health insurance and job security.

Religious, civil rights, entertainment and environmental leaders have joined unions in the National Strawberry Commission for Worker Rights. "Even though strawberry workers are in California, this fight will be everywhere," promises AFL-CIO Presi-

dent John Sweeney. "It will be at thousands of supermarkets where we will seek support for basic rights for strawberry workers. It will be in the streets when necessary. It will be in the corporate offices as well, where the strawberry barons operate."

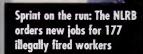
In the months leading up to the march, workers will tour major cities and organize on college campuses for alternative Spring Break trips to Watsonville.

Thousands of supporters from

around the country are expected to join in the march as well as a "teach-in" and concert

planned for the same weekend. As the AFL-CIO Executive Council noted in a statement last December: "Through support for this march, the labor movement can show the strawberry industry—and all of corporate America—that workers will not be daunted or deterred from their determination to organize."

For information on the campaign or the march, call 1-888-AFL-CIOO (202-637-5280 in Washington, D.C.).



A Long Awaited Decision

he National Labor Relations Board has ordered Sprint Corp. to rehire 177 mostly Latina women it fired in 1994one week before the workers were set to vote for representation by the Communications Workersand pay back wages estimated at nearly \$15 million.

The board ruled that a Sprint vice president falsified a "paper trail" to make it appear that corporate directors were concerned about the financial situation of

Sprint's Spanish-language facility in San Francisco, La Conexion Familiar, which was actually highly profitable. It was a thin cover for an extensive campaign to prevent the workers from organizing.

The board ruled that Sprint would not have to reopen the division, but would have to pay back wages and find comparable jobs for the dismissed workers. The company said it would appeal the decision.

MAKING HISTO IN THE BUILDING TRADES

n one of the most ambitious undertakings in the history of the building trades, 15 unions have launched a multicraft, marketwide organizing campaign in Las Vegas.

The push in fast-growing Las Vegas aims to organize new members in the building trades as well as to protect existing members' jobs, says Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, which is working with affiliates, the AFL-CIO and the Southern Nevada Building Trades.

The campaign will involve every construction craft and will be based on worker-to-worker organizing. "It will also serve as a training ground for hundreds of organizers from across the country," Georgine adds. Roughly 1,000 activists will be mobilized and trained to reach out to nonunion construction workers.

"The Building Trades Organizing Project takes on all the organizing challenges the labor movement faces in a smart, strategic way," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. The AFL-CIO has pledged financial and technical assistance for the project.

Jim Rudicil, construction organizing director for the IBEW, will direct the organizing drive, and BCTD affiliates have assigned their top organizers to work on the campaign.

The city already has a strong union base, with the vast majority of hotel and casino workers organized by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, and is experiencing a building boom in hotels, casinos, residential and infrastructure construction.



DAVID BACON/IMPACT VISUALS

WINNING STRATEGY

IN is more than a catchy slogan for the members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 25 in Washington, D.C. The Worker Initiative Network is part of a long-term strategy to boost organizing and protect current members' rights and benefits.

So far, it's proven to be a WINning strategy. It has helped Local 25 move out of downtown Washington to organize its first hotel in suburban Virginia.

"This is the first bottom-up win at a suburban hotel in some 20 years," says Local 25 President John Boardman of the successful drive among mostly Spanish-speaking workers at the Airport Hilton. "We had two Organizing Institute graduates heading up the campaign, and we used three members of our WIN team to help with translation and housecalls."

Through WIN, members pledge five hours a week for direct organizing activities, usually among workers with similar jobs. A leave-of-absence program allows them time off from work during the last four to six weeks of a campaign to become full-time organizers.

The union plans to increase its technical capabilities and use a rapid-response multimedia campaign to alert workers to some of the anti-union tactics companies will use to squash their efforts. "The immigrant workers who are taking jobs in the suburbs are beginning to realize that they have rights, and they are enthusiastic about organizing," says Boardman.

Local 25 has committed one third of its resources to organizing, and the international is providing matching funds.

Is Corporate America Listening?

hould corporations provide retirement benefits to nonemployee directors? That's what shareholders and union members are asking, and corporations appear to be listening, says a new report by the Conference Board. A comparison of surveys in 1995 and 1996 revealed that some companies-including American Express, Bell Atlantic, Chrysler and Philip Morris—stopped paying directors' pension benefits. Others said they plan to discontinue the benefits for directors who have not yet retired. The report credits the growing pressure from labor unions and shareholder activists.

THUMBS DOWN FOR RANSOM

Walt Disney Pictures has kidnapped the Machinists' good reputation and the union wants it back. The IAM recently filed a libel action against Disney for denigrating references to a "machinists union" in the blockbuster movie "Ransom" and seeks \$50 million in damages.

In the film released last
November, the plot centers
around a corrupt "machinists
union official" who was bribed by
a wealthy airline owner to prevent a strike. Barraged by
inquiries from concerned members and filmgoers, the IAM
asked Disney to delete references to the "machinists' union."
The request was rejected.

"We feel it is necessary to protect the reputation of the Machinists union, its members and all working people who belong to unions across America," says IAM President George Kourpias. "The day when you could paint unions, their members and representatives with the broad brush of corruption and get away with it is over."

Union Jobs FOR THE BAY AREA

A t least 3,000 new union construction jobs are coming to the San Francisco Bay Area as a result of a project agreement between the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department and the University of California's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

More than 75 percent of the \$1.1 billion project to build the nation's superlaser, the National Ignition Facility, will be spent in the construction and manufacturing industries.

"Concluding a labor agreement before the start of construction is a win for everybody," observes Mike Campbell, head of Laser Programs at Livermore.

The NIF will allow researchers to validate advanced weapons codes and evaluate specific problems that may develop in warheads as they

age. @

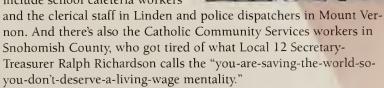


SPOTLIGHT

Pretty Fast for a Small Ship

he Service Employees Local 120 in Washington state is showing that size has nothing to do with how fast a union moves. Though it represents only a few thousand members, the local is organizing at an incredible rate—four units covering nearly 150 workers in the last several months alone.

The union's newest members include school cafeteria workers



There are far more trees than people in the area around Everett. Richardson admits, but the union is leaving no branch unturned. With a vast geographic area to cover, member organizers usually have to fly or take ferries to reach unorganized workers. "We do what we have to do to grow," Richardson said. "We've always had an organizing line in our budget, and we've used member organizers for the last four years."

The local is preparing to put more resources into organizing and hire a full-time organizer.



ore than 300 union members and leaders on Long Island turned out for a town hall meeting with Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D) last month to talk about good jobs, health care, pension security and education. At the packed Plumbers Hall in Mineola, N.Y., union members focused on "kitchen-table" economics and heard firsthand where the newly-elected congresswoman stands.

The gathering was one of 100 face-to-face meetings and town hall forums unions are scheduling with new members of Congress across the country. "New members of Congress need to understand the high stakes workers have in the decisions their elected officials make in Congress," says Jack Caffey, president of the Long Island AFL-CIO.

The meetings are part of the AFL-CIO's ongoing outreach program to educate and mobilize around a working families agenda and hold elected leaders accountable. If you'd like to know more about setting up a meeting in your district, call Suzanne Granville at 202-637-5357.

ORGANIZING

• Free Choice for Levi Workers: Free of hassles, intimidation or the NLRB, 450 workers at the Levi Strauss plant in Blue Ridge, Ga., last month won representation by UNITE. After a majority of the workers signed union authorization cards, and they were verified by a neutral third party, Levi voluntarily recognized the union on Jan. 23. The workers are now covered by a UNITE master agreement.

The card-check recognition procedure is part of a unique partnership between UNITE and Levi. In 1994, "we signed an agreement designed to increase efficiency, secure jobs and give workers a free choice concerning union membership," says Bruce Raynor, executive vice president and southern regional director of UNITE.

Blue Ridge is the second plant organized under the agreement. Two years ago, Levi also voluntarily recognized 600 workers at its Albuquerque plant.

Prior to the 1994 pact, the company had also signed a code of conduct on the treatment of workers at offshore plants.

• Physicians on the Rise: In today's managed care environment, a growing number of physicians are fighting to restore their voice in patient care decisions—and turning to unions as a result. At the Thomas-Davis Medical Clinic in Tucson, Ariz., for example, 150 physicians recently voted by a 3-to-1 margin in favor of representation by AFSCME-affiliated Federation of Physicians and Dentists/National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees. The reason: Growing frustrations over clinic decisions based on costs rather than patients' needs.

"This will dramatically begin the process of allowing doctors to return to their traditional roles as patient advocates," said Dr. Robert Osborne, a physician active in the organizing drive.

The AFSCME affiliate, which represents state-employed doctors in Florida, is also involved in organizing drives among physicians in Albuquerque, Miami and Seattle.

OUT FRONT

t every opportunity, I'm asking local as well as national unions and our state and central labor bodies to shift leadership and resources into organizing—even if it means cutting back on other functions. Why? Because if we don't rebuild our membership base, nothing else is going to matter very much. Over the past 20 years, we shrank from representing 27 percent of the work force to 14 percent. And every working family paid a price as the American labor movement got clobbered from the ballot box to the bargaining table.

At the AFL-CIO, we're setting an example by spending fully one third of our budget on organizing. Equally important, we're involving every department, every staff member in organizing activities.

WE MUST DEFEND THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

by John J. Sweeney



But we need to do more than simply shift our emphasis as a movement. We need to aggressively defend the right of workers to join or form unions.

The right to join or form unions is supposedly protected by our national labor laws. But those laws have been reduced to graffiti by employers large and small who know they can break them and never be held accountable. Illegally interfering with, delaying and defeating union organizing campaigns is a growth industry in our country. Harassing, intimidating and terminating workers for union activity has become a national sport.

Shouldn't we change our labor laws and put some teeth in them so workers can be protected? Absolutely. But the truth is, that's not going to happen this year, or even in this session of Congress.

In order to lay the groundwork for eventual labor law reform, we're now holding town hall meetings to help educate Congressional representatives about the struggles working Americans face when trying to organize. And we're using those meetings as a springboard to build our grassroots political action network, one that will hold elected leaders accountable to America's working families.

But we need more. We need to confront employers who violate our labor laws, and to convince our political leaders that the right to join a union is as vital to our society as the right to free speech and the right to be free from discrimination.

We need to begin treating anti-union bosses like we treat antiunion politicians. If a boss fires a worker, we should get the boss fired. If an employer takes us on, we should take the fight public.

To put this new organizing attitude to work, we're asking tens of thousands of union activists to join a new solidarity and rapid response team dedicated to helping workers who are trying to organize or bargain a first contract. Through this effort, we will turn up the heat on employers who violate the basic right to organize.

Together with our natural allies in the community, we will expose the shameful violation of workers' rights to join unions to improve their lives. And we will let millions of unrepresented workers know that, while it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a union to get a raise.

Like It Is

We're All in the Same Global Boat

There's only one way to keep it from sinking. Bring up the bottom.

By William Greider



Globalization is a fat buzzword that gets tossed around by glib economists and business leaders. But, when I set out three years ago to write my new book on the global economy, I knew that my real subject would be the human consequences of globalized production, the

wrenching changes under way in the world's industrial system. The emerging "one world" marketplace may be good capital for companies, but is it good for people?

At an industrial zone outside Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia, I saw the spectacle up close. As shifts changed at the Motorola factory, dozens of delicate young Malay women, wearing the chaste veils of their Muslim heritage, streamed into the changing room. When they emerged a few moments later, they looked like space-age explorers—dressed in silken jump suits, their heads cloaked by white bonnets and surgical masks, ready to perform the exacting task of assembling semiconductor chips.

Motorola, in a sense, was liberating these peasant women from the limits imposed by their own traditional culture. But the typical wage rate in this burgeoning industry is \$130 to \$150 a month—not enough to support family life even in very poor countries.

When the U.S. semiconductor industry decided to make Malaysia its largest offshore assembly base, the companies struck an explicit deal with the government: no unions. That was nearly 25 years ago. When the Malaysian government considered lifting the ban, some American companies issued a blunt warning: if you allow electronics workers to form independent trade unions, we're moving our factories elsewhere—perhaps to Indonesia or China where free trade unions are brutally suppressed. The government backed down.

In China, I visited Xian Aircraft Company, a huge industrial site controlled by the People's Lib-

eration Army, where machinists make \$50 a month and manufacture everything from diving boards and ferris wheels to Volvo tour buses and the tail sections for Boeing 737s. These are prime jobs in China, and the state-owned enterprise provides every comfort—housing, schools, hospital, even a night club for entertainment.

What these Chinese workers do not enjoy are free speech, freedom of assembly and other basic rights that would allow them to organize their own collective voice—the power to demand a fairer share of the returns and some control over their own lives.

On the shop floor, the Boeing workers are overseen by Communist Party cadres. When their work is considered sub-par, their punishment is cash deducted from their meager pay. When I expressed my surprise at this discipline, a Boeing manager explained that it was better than the alternative. "They used to shoot them," he said.

In Indonesia, I went to interview the leader of a new independent—and illegal—labor federation, but when I got to the union's shabby headquarters on a back alley of Jakarta, Muchtar Pakpahan wasn't there. He had been arrested the night before. Pakpahan is now charged with treason, facing a possible death sentence. His crime? Asserting the right to organize workers in their own self-interest. The global economy described as free trade is free, it seems, for everyone except workers.

American workers have a direct stake in the lives of these other people, however strange and distant they may

seem. The depressed wages in America and the mass unemployment in Europe, even the hollowing out of Japanese manufacturing, are all directly driven by the absence of labor rights in many developing countries.

William Greider

Until exploited workers elsewhere have the ability to bargain up their own wages, the downdraft on U.S. prosperity will continue. So will deindustrialization. The political goal must be: bring up the bottom, as rapidly as possible, instead of pulling the top down. This will not stop all the dislocation and losses, but it will turn globalization in a more positive direction.

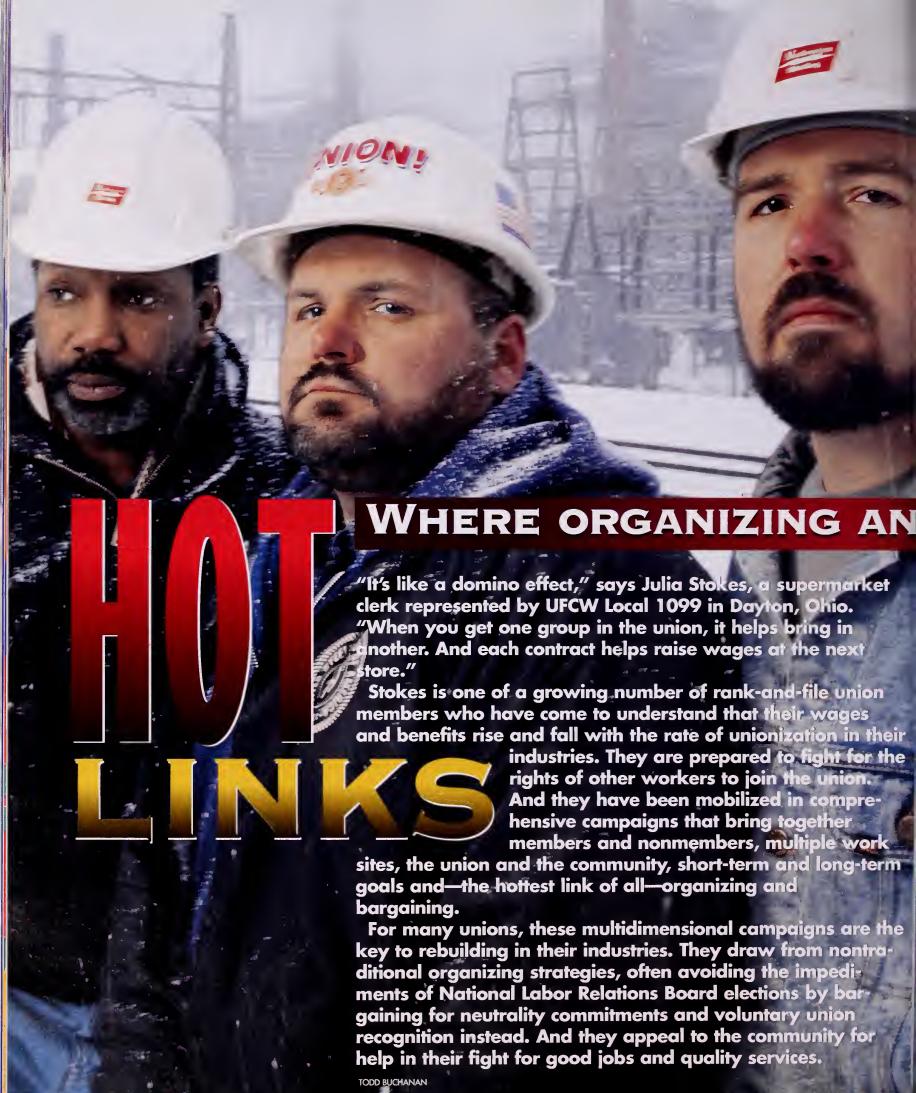
The question of human rights, in other words, is an economic issue. The global system has bountiful production—what it lacks are consumers, workers with incomes ample enough to buy all of the goods the world can now produce. The staggering surpluses in productive capacity stalk the global auto industry, aircraft, chemicals, steel, tires, consumer electronics, drugs and other sectors. Too many goods, too few buyers. More factories must be closed somewhere. That is the knifeedge threatening everyone's security.

The system's boosters generally ignore this reality by arguing that globalization is rescuing millions of peasants from muddy poverty—so don't interfere. But, if the workers in poorer countries are so happy with their situation, why do they stage so many strikes? The American press seldom reports on this, but there are hundreds, even thousands of wildcat strikes across developing Asia and elsewhere.

Their struggles are often put down by military force, arrests and official violence. Some brave workers—recklessly brave, I think—even try to start free unions in China. The penalty there is many years in prison or perhaps death.

My message to Americans at work is this: their fight is your fight. An infant labor movement is struggling to be born in poor nations on the other end of the global economy. It desperately needs help from workers and unions in wealthier countries. You should rally to their cause because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in your own economic self-interest.

William Greider's new book is *One World*, *Ready* or *Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*, Simon & Schuster.



This is hardly a new concept. In fact, it largely describes how the labor movement was built during the 1930s. Decades ago, when the share of organized workers was peaking, unions negotiated various forms of voluntary recognition agreements that continue to give thousands and thousands of workers a chance to join the union. Neutrality and card-check agreements negotiated by the Teamsters, for example, allowed 500 workers at an Anheuser-Busch brewery in Georgia to freely join the union in 1991. And more than 10,000 workers in Chicago will get the same chance when UPS opens a new facility during the next several years.

During the 1980s, as unionization rates dropped and employers became more adept at manipulating the NLRB process, neutrality agreements got harder to come by—and to enforce. In industry after industry, union members found it difficult to hold on to their jobs, wages and benefits, much less bargain to improve their lives.

But today, by mobilizing members around the need to make organizing a top bargaining priority, many unions are bouncing back.

The UFCW, with its focus on regaining the union's "market share" in the grocery industry, has organized hundreds of thousands of new members through voluntary card-check recognition since the mid-1980s. By negotiating neutrality language in its major steel mill agreements, the Steelworkers union is organizing newly-opened mills and putting a lid on outsourcing. The Service Employees union is organizing to bargain and bargaining to organize in its Justice for Janitors, Dignity and other campaigns. And the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees have negotiated card-check recognition provisions that have allowed the union to grow without relying on NLRB elections.

The organizing rights protections vary from contract to contract, but often include provisions such as union access to lists and facilities, a ban on employer anti-union campaigning, and voluntary recognition through a card-check or a non-NLRB election procedure. In the health care industry, for example, SEIU locals are negotiating language that allows employees to vote in a non-NLRB election overseen by community or political leaders, along with expedited arbitra-

tion. In Texas, CWA campaigned to win a neutrality agreement with automatic card-check recognition if the employer violates it. And the Steelworkers have won first-contract arbitration in their card-check recognition agreements.

Ten years ago, when CWA began its first campaigns for neutrality and card-check recognition language in its core contracts with AT&T and other major employers, the union simultaneously revamped its 50-year-old member education program. "If members are not involved in the fight for expanded rights through collective bargaining, then trying to negotiate for those rights is a meaningless gesture," says CWA Organizing Director Larry Cohen.

At the same time, unions are enlisting the community in the fight. By building in education strategies that sensitize the public and consumers about such issues as fairness and the erosion of good jobs, many unions are winning broad support for their organizing and bargaining campaigns. In the process, they are climbing their way back to a position of strength—and building the kind of labor movement that once again can change workers' lives.

ARGAINING COME FULL CIRCLE

STEEL BONDS

Catching up with companies on the run

ver since outsourcing became the rage in private industry, the jobs and livelihoods of working families have been threatened as never before—even in industries where the union remains strong. For Steelworkers, the ultimate horror came a few years ago when LTV—one of the big steel companies from which they had secured a neutrality agreement in 1993—slithered through a loophole in the agreement to open a nonunion mill in Alabama.

"Union companies opening nonunion plants is the most blatant form of outsourcing," says USWA President George Becker. "We didn't save the steel industry in the 1980s to allow the industry to become nonunion. And we sure didn't do it to have the very companies that we saved turn around and try to destroy the union."

So in 1995, when Northwestern Steel & Wire opened a small nonunion rolling mill in Hickman, Kentucky, a loophole-free neutrality agreement

quickly became a top bargaining priority for 1,800 union members in Sterling, Illinois. Last year, the union combined organizing, bargaining and community mobilization in a comprehensive campaign focusing on the preservation of good jobs.

"The new plant directly threatened jobs here, and our members understood that," says Art Gillihan, president of USWA Local 63 in Sterling. "We were determined to use our bargaining leverage to make sure workers in Hickman

USWA LOCAL 63
STERLING, ILLINOIS

could freely exercise their rights to join the union—and to eliminate any incentive to shift our work to Kentucky."

Along with an organizing drive at the Hickman mill, the Steelworkers launched a campaign to mobilize members and engage the community in Sterling, as well as at an organized Northwestern mill in Houston. A contract action committee staged huge rallies, including two demonstrations with more than 1,500 people at the

company's offices. Rank-and-file members gathered signatures on petitions and enlisted the support of local politicians. And by the time their contract expired last summer, most Sterling shopkeepers had posted "Support Local 63" signs in their windows. "The community didn't want to see jobs leave," says Gillihan. "They were solidly behind our struggle."

The intense organizing-bargaining campaign reached a dramatic conclusion late last summer, when Northwestern workers won a settlement that includes raises, substantial pension improvements, new protections against subcontracting and a breakthrough provision giving first preference in all hiring to children and relatives of existing members. In addition, the union contract includes a far-reaching clause that not only calls for neutrality in all future organizing drives, but also gives a hiring preference for union members at any new facility, voluntary card-check recognition and first contract arbitration. The clause applies to Northwestern as well as to any company in which it makes a material investment—thereby closing what has come to be known as the "LTV loophole."

Better still, when the company was presented with signed cards at the bargaining table, Northwestern recognized the union on the spot. Negotiations are now under way for a first contract at Hickman. "We were strong and ready to strike," says Becker. "The company had made a decision to run and we caught them—by organizing our members."

MARKET FORCES

Keeping up with the competition

n 1970, when he first went to work at a Kroger market in Cincinnati, Lenny Wyatt earned \$2.12 an hour. Ten years later he was making \$11. "But at the time the union was strong in this market," recalls Wyatt, who today is the president of Food and Commercial Workers Local 1099. "Through the '80s and early '90s, we went downhill, with one concession after another. So in 1992, we made the decision to start campaigning. It was organize or die."

Like other UFCW locals around the country, Local 1099 had seen the market share of unionized stores plummet in Cincinnati and Dayton, taking decent paying jobs and benefits along with it. But since 1993, the union has grown from 12,000 to 18,000 members, representing 75 percent of the commercial food workers in Dayton. And in the last three years, the union has gone from concession bargaining to winning substantial improvements in all of its contracts—including at Kroger.

The turnaround is the result of "Operation Competition," the union's all-out campaign to educate and mobilize the community around the high cost of shopping nonunion and to organize

by fighting for neutrality and card-check recognition at nonunion stores.

Operation Competition began with a vote by union members at Kroger to assess a half-hour's pay per month for campaign activities, a commitment that was renewed in 1996. Augmented by contributions from the local's general treasury, the organizing fund now makes up 25 percent of the budget.

The union's first target was Cub Foods, which had opened in Dayton in 1986. "We knew, given Cub's general attitude, that we should avoid the NLRB process," Wyatt says.

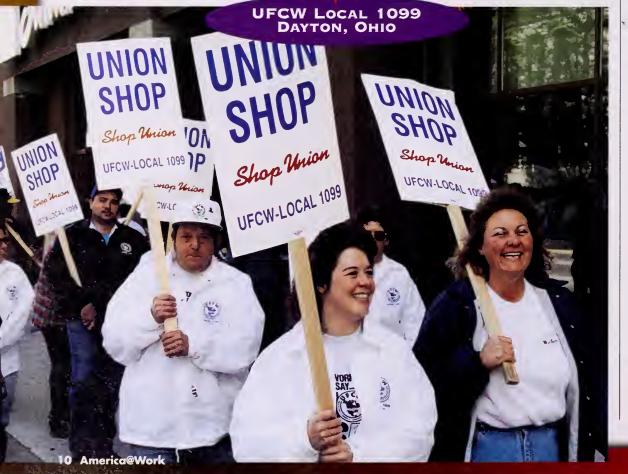
Operation Competition lasted three years at Cub, with picketing at the chain's four stores, mailings and phone banks targeted to specific neighborhoods, visibility at community festivals and events, support from the African-American and religious communities and solidarity from other Dayton area unions.

"Our message was about fairness," Wyatt says. "We emphasized the need for a community value system, to bring home the idea that we all work for a living and we need a level playing field."

By the time Cub agreed to neutrality and card check recognition, the union's community campaign had even convinced another nonunion chain, Meijer, to remain neutral in their employees' organizing drive. Local 1099 was able to organize 3,600 workers in 12 Cub and Meijer stores. "We also got a neutrality agreement from Meijer covering its six Cincinnati stores," Wyatt says.

The union's market share rebound allowed it to reopen negotiations early at Kroger's and make improvements in health benefits, sick pay and other areas. And the bargaining outlook for the future is bright, says Wyatt. "Meijer's contract also improved in 1995, and we expect similar gains for Cub workers during the next round."

These days, Operation Competition is under way at several nonunion independent chains, including Schear's and Howard's.





CHAIN GAINS

Bringing home a nationwide agreement

f any group of workers understands the vital link between organizing and bargaining, it's nursing home workers. That's because for the past several years, the Service Employees' nationwide "Dignity, Rights and Respect" campaign has been educating and mobilizing the lowwage workers, particularly those employed by large for-profit chains, around the need to organize for a position of strength in the industry.

The "Dignity" campaign is a perfect example of how unions can synthesize organizing, bargaining and community action to raise the living and working standards in an industry. By raising workers' consciousness about competition in the nonunion sector, joining forces with other advocates of quality care and making organizing rights for nonunion workers a top bargaining priority, SEIU locals are tackling the poor resident care and working conditions that are so pervasive in the nation's nursing homes.

A case in point is the union's multi-faceted campaign at GranCare, a nationwide chain of nearly 70 nursing homes. By uniting nursing home workers in Michigan, Wisconsin and California, the union won its first-ever multi-local national nursing home contract—in which GranCare agreed to procedures for union recognition for workers who wish to organize.

"By taking aggressive action and involving our members at the very start of the negotiating process, we created an atmosphere where management took us seriously," says SEIU Executive Vice President Paul Policicchio.

When the campaign was launched in 1993,

SEIU locals represented workers at 14 GranCare facilities in Michigan and California. As those locals worked to line up their contract expiration dates, another organized workers at three GranCare homes in Milwaukee. At the same time, SEIU was bringing hundreds of GranCare workers together for Dignity conferences in Detroit, Pittsburgh and California. By early 1995, 2,000 workers in 17 homes in three states were working as a united force.

The campaign accelerated during the following spring and summer, when several of the locals' contracts expired. After the company broke off negotiations, nursing home workers began demonstrating at GranCare shareholders' meetings, picketing at state legislators' homes and staging one-day unfair labor practice strikes in Michigan and Wisconsin. Residents' families frequently joined the boisterous picket lines. And workers stayed pumped up by participating in national conference calls and wearing solidarity stickers on designated days.

When the local unions filed notices for openended strikes, GranCare came back to the bargaining table. Within days, the union settled a

nationwide agreement with strong organizing protections-including access to lists and facilities, recognition through a non-NLRB election procedure, expedited arbitration and a code of conduct prohibiting union busters, one-on-one meetings, coercion and intimidation.

As a result, SEIU has since organized two additional GranCare nursing homes in Michigan. "Our working relationship with GranCare has changed," says Bonnie Ladin, SEIU nursing home division director. "And we've taken a big step forward in our mission to improve staffing and resident care, and to lift nursing home workers out of poverty." The new agreement calls for paid labor-management patient care committees, creating a model SEIU will pursue in other nursing home campaigns.

BY MAKING ORGANIZING RIGHTS A TOP BARGAINING PRIORITY, SEIU IS TACKLING POOR RESIDENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE NATION'S NURSING HOMES.

The Living Wage

Rage

wage increase six months ago, a grassroots "living wage" movement is sweeping the country. Just weeks ago, labor and community activists forced action on policies to raise local wages in Houston and St. Paul. Last November, they put living wage initiatives on five ballots—winning in California and Oregon but unsuccessful in Denver, Missouri and Montana. And today, a burst of living wage activity goes on in Albuquerque, Boston, Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, New Orleans and scores of other cities and states.

nfettered by passage of the federal minimum

From legislative proposals to ballot initiatives, local ordinances to statewide laws, living wage measures are widely supported by the public—but meeting with mixed results. Some living campaigns, despite initial enthusiasm from voters, fail at the polls after well-financed business groups take to the airwaves with scare-tactic ads warning of higher prices and job loss. Others overcome fierce political and business opposition through intense grassroots lobbying or getout-the-vote drives.

But win or lose, unions and community groups alike say living wage campaigns pay off in the long run with the permanent coalitions, stronger organizations, reputations as champions and new potential for organizing they create. "The community knows who we are, and that we're standing up not just for union members but for all workers," says Jack Hawkins, president of the Denver labor council, which joined forces with ACORN, 9to5 and other groups to place an initiative on last November's ballot. Up against an \$800,000 ad campaign by the opposition, the initiative didn't pass-but Hawkins has no regrets. "We stirred up a debate about what it takes to survive," says Hawkins. "And now even the mayor, who didn't support the initiative, has agreed to work with us on a living wage policy ordinance."

Ignited by heightened awareness of the growing wage inequalities in this country, the living wage movement began before the federal law was passed—but hasn't slowed down since. Polls taken in several states last September revealed that the federal raise to \$5.15 an hour didn't take the edge off public support for state and local minimum wage increases. "I've carried lots of petitions, but on this one people would literally rip the clipboard out of your hand and say, 'It's about time,'" says Darrell Holzer of the Montana AFL-CIO.

Despite opposition by businesses in Oregon, for example, 55 percent of poll-goers in the state voted to raise the state's minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour. "The public's not ready to believe that's an extraordinary wage to pay people," says Oregon AFL-CIO President Irvin Fletcher.

"Communities are increasingly concerned that the people showing up at homeless shelters are working people, but that's only part of the story," says Christine Owens, director of the Worker Options Resource Center, an information clearinghouse for the living wage movement. "They're also resentful that corporations are not being held accountable and, if anything, are being rewarded with government subsidies and lucrative contracts."

That sentiment may explain why so many successful living wage initiatives are local ordi-

nances that require contractors and other companies who do business with the government to pay above-poverty wages. If the public objects to companies reaping huge profits by paying low wages, it's even worse when they're taxpayer-supported. Backed by labor-community coalitions, such ordinances were passed

in the last two years by the cities of Baltimore, Jersey City, Milwaukee, New York, Portland and, most recently, St. Paul. Today, similar ordinances are under consideration in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New Haven and other cities.

So far at least, citywide minimum wage increases have been harder to come by. The "\$6.50 for the City" initiative in Houston was so popular that activists from UFCW,

AFSCME, SEIU and other unions, all part of a labor-community coalition organized by the Harris County AFL-CIO, had no trouble collecting 50,000 signatures to place it on a special ballot last month. But in the end, the Houston living wage campaign was unable to overcome well-financed opposition, most notably from restaurant groups. To date, the only city in the country with its own minimum wage higher than the federal one is Washington.

State minimum wage increases, on the other hand, have fared better. In addition to the winning ballot initiatives in California and Oregon last November, state legislatures in Delaware, Rhode Island and Vermont raised their minimum wages before the federal bill passed last year. A grassroots lobbying campaign orchestrated by the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, during which union members and leaders met with senators and representatives in two thirds of the state's 100 districts, convinced the leadership in both houses and ultimately the Republican governor to support the increase. "The opposition from the tourist and restaurant industries faded away," says Frank Montanaro, president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO.

Where state initiatives failed, such as in Missouri and Montana, the opposition—financed by such big-leaguers as Texaco and Sears—barraged the airwaves with alarmist ads. "The voters were with us until the National Restaurant Association dumped in \$200,000 in the last month," says Don Judge, executive secretary of the Montana AFL-CIO. "You saw five or six ads a day,

• Baltimore

Some say the living wage movement got its start in Baltimore, where the BUILD labor-community coalition spearheaded by AFSCME won an ordinance two years ago requiring city contractors to pay \$6.10 an hour. Last year, they upped the wage to \$6.60 and, contrary

business
groups, it
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finances.

• Houston

The idea of a city minimum wage increase in Houston was so popular that union and community activists got 50,000 petition signatures, 15,000 in one day alone.

Against the well-financed scare tactics of business groups, the special ballot initiative failed to pass last month—but living wage advocates say the grassroots organizing and coalition-building will continue.



• California

California's Livable Wage Coalition struck a responsive chord with voters, who passed Proposition 210 last November to raise the statewide minimum wage to \$5.75 an hour in 1998. "The vast majority of workers have seen a decline in the standard of living, and the campaign gave people a way to actually do something about it," says Richard Holober of the California AFL-CIO.

frightening little old ladies, telling them they'd have to leave Montana because prices would get so high if this thing passed."

Such tactics are typical of the local and national corporate interests which claim that living wage initiatives will drive businesses away and cause massive job loss—and spare no expense in getting out their message.

Their deep pockets are leading many advocates to ask: What does it take to overcome the resources of the political and business opposition? And are living wage measures the right strategy for raising workers' living standards?

Those questions were the focus of a recent nationwide living wage conference sponsored by the AFL-CIO. Union and community living wage advocates from around the country, who had first gathered last spring during the height of the AFL-CIO "America Needs A Raise" campaign, reconvened in Washington last month to share lessons learned and evaluate their goals and strategies.

In many ways, the living wage movement is

still in its infancy. There's no magic formula for determining when and where to push for living wage initiatives and no magic answers for how to win them. But the collective experiences of union and community groups around the country suggest that there are at least four essential ingredients in a winning living wage campaign.

A strong labor-community coalition with staying power. Perhaps the best example of how effective a labor-community coalition can be is found in Baltimore, where some organizers say the living wage movement began. Spearheaded by AFSCME, a coalition of labor, church and community groups known as BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development) won a living wage ordinance two years ago requiring city contractors to pay \$6.10 an hour. Last year, they upped the wage to \$6.60, and they're aiming to reach \$7.70, the rate needed to bring a family of four over the poverty line. BUILD has since spawned other organizing in the city, and even paved the way for state workers to gain collective bargaining rights last year.

The coalition is the most direct possible way to address the problem of poverty in Baltimore, says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "We think the answer is a 'social compact' and decent wages."

To add weight to the argument, a recent study by the Preamble Center for Public Policy found that—despite claims to the contrary by business groups—Baltimore's living wage has had no adverse effect on jobs or city finances, and that business investment has actually increased since the law was passed.

People and financial resources.

Where business groups decide to launch an allout attack against a living wage initiative, particularly if it's a ballot measure, unions and community groups will rarely be able to match their resources dollar for dollar. For this reason, living wage strategies should be based on an analysis of the extent of the opposition and the resources that will be required.

The need for resources is particularly important in statewide campaigns. In Missouri, for instance, the living wage initiative won decisively among voters in St. Louis, where every household in low-income areas received a visit and literature from the campaign. But, up against a business-funded radio and television ad campaign claiming the living wage would cost Missouri 250,000 jobs, it lost statewide.

In California, on the other hand, the Livable Wage Coalition raised enough funds to neutral-

• Milwaukee

Government contractors have no business paying below-poverty wages, reaping profits at tax-payer and worker expense. At least that's how Milwaukee's labor community feels. They convinced the city and school board to pass living wage ordinances that guarantee \$6.60 an hour to contracted employees, and hope to do the same with the county and state.

CAROLE CASAMENTO/



ize opponents (who admittedly were funneling most of their resources into other ballot initiative fights) with a well-planned media and grassroots campaign to increase the state minimum wage to \$5.75 an hour. But their most valuable resource wasn't money, it was union members. The campaign was plugged into a massive grassroots mobilization effort that drew more than 12,000 union political action

volunteers. On Election Day, labor

turnout in some parts of the state

was higher than it had been in

decades.

"The vast majority of workers have seen a decline in the standard of living, and the campaign gave people a way to actually do something about it," says Richard Holober of the California AFL-CIO.

Elected leaders who champion the cause. In Milwaukee last year, first
the city council and then the school board
adopted living wage ordinances guaranteeing
\$6.60 an hour for employees of private contractors. Union and community activists, who hope
to persuade the county and state to do the same,
laid the groundwork for their successive victories by working to elect local politicians who
would make living wage a top priority.

"You really need champions, even if they're not a majority," says Bruce Colburn of the Milwaukee Labor Council. Living wage advocates in Missouri and Denver would agree. In both cases, the absence of support from elected leaders made it virtually impossible to counter the arguments of the opposition.

A smart, well-planned strategy. "Its

important to be realistic about what's achievable," says Holober, noting that the California Livable Wage Campaign consulted with economists before settling on a minimum wage goal of \$5.75 an hour by 1998. Statewide polling revealed strong public support for the measure—even though fewer than 10 percent of those surveyed said the increase would directly affect their families.

The California ballot initiative played to a key strength of the labor movement—the capacity to get out the vote. But in other venues, legislative measures may stand a greater chance of succeeding. Last month, for example, the St. Paul City Council passed a living wage ordinance that links economic devel-

• New York

There was a rally on Wall Street last summer, but not just in the stock market.

During the height of the AFL-CIO's "America Needs A Raise" campaign, union and community groups took to the streets with actions to draw attention to the growing wage and wealth gap. Last summer, they converged in New York to protest corporate policies that are driving wages down.

STEVE MILLER/MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY

opment subsidies to businesses with the creation or retention

of living wage jobs. A similar measure was defeated at the polls 18 months ago—after a coalition of unions, religious leaders, community groups and small businesses was outspent 10 to 1 by large corporations.

On the heels of their victory in St. Paul, the

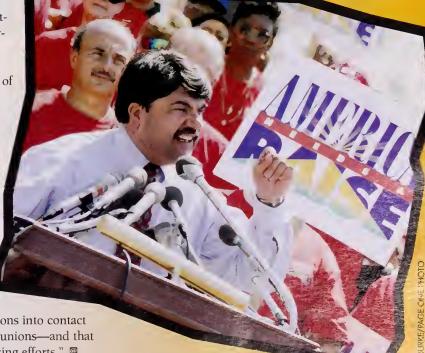
coalition is already pursuing the same strategy in neighboring Minneapolis. But even in cities where living wage initiatives failed to pass, many of the partnerships that were formed during the campaign remain. "In the past, we've always formed loose coalitions. It's been kind of hit or miss," says Hawkins in Denver. "This time, we really got to know each other over a longer period of time. Organizationally, we're much stronger-and that's the most important benefit we derived from the campaign."

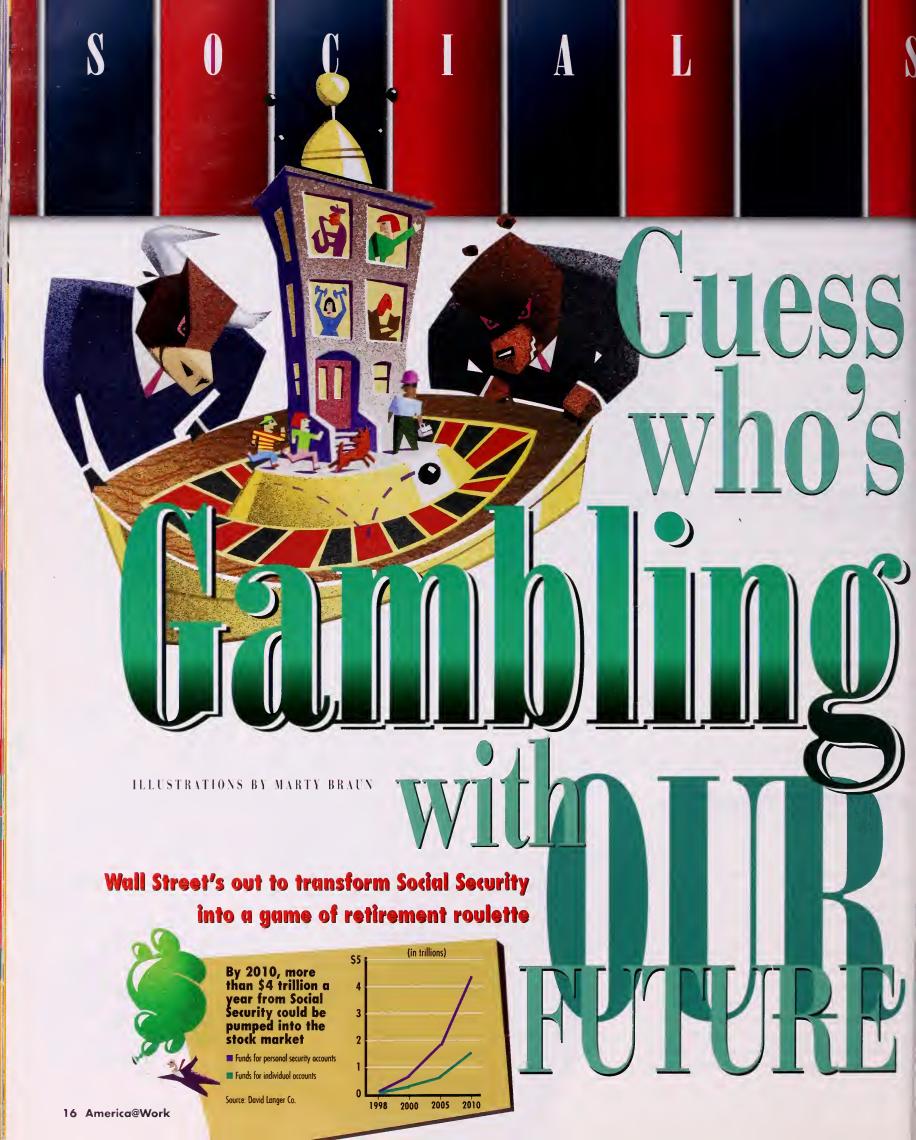
"Our campaign has broadened unions' appeal in the community," adds Richard Shaw, secretarytreasurer of the Harris County AFL-CIO in

Houston. "It's brought our unions into contact with other folks who aren't in unions—and that will assist many of our organizing efforts."

• Washington, D.C.

The AFL-CIO "America Needs A Raise" campaign last year cast a spotlight on declining family incomes. Actions on Capitol Hill by union leaders (including the AFL-CIO's Richard Trumka) and members kept the pressure on Congress, which passed a federal minimum wage six months ago. Today, support for local living wage initiatives is







or the most part, they're operating incognito. Money managers, bankers, insurance companies and business groups are quietly and surreptitiously bankrolling conservative think tanks, hiring advertising and consulting firms and courting members of Congress. To keep a low profile, they're hiding

behind groups like Citizens for a Sound Economy, which are known for their "grassroots" campaigns on behalf of large corporate interests.

What's the undercover operation all about? It's maneuvering in a game where winner takes all—and the stakes couldn't be higher. The financial industry is out to convince America that Social Security is on the brink of bankruptcy (it's not), that it won't be around for young people when they need it (it will), and that only replacing Social Security with "individual retirement accounts" can rescue it (an outright lie).

According to *The Washington Post*, more than \$4 trillion a year could be pumped into the stock market from Social Security account plans by the year 2010, with investment management and administrative fees totaling \$240 billion. The winners would be financial brokers and advisors. The losers would be working families, whose retirement security would fluctuate with the ups and downs of the stock market. And the biggest losers would be women, who count on Social Security most.

Ironically, it was the *Wall Street Journal* that blew the lid off the scheme last year when it reported that Social Security privatization could be "the biggest bonanza in the history of the mutual fund industry."

Leading the "privateer" pack is the Investment Company Institute (ICI), a trade association for the mutual funds industry that has hired a prominent lobbying firm and lobbied Congress to support the diversion of Social Security funds into the stock market. But they aren't the only ones. Wall Street brokerage houses, insurance companies and Fortune 500 firms are among the behind-the-scenes contributors to a \$2.5 million campaign by the libertarian Cato Institute to persuade the public that Social Secu-

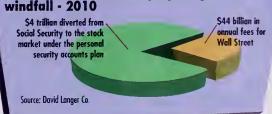
rity is heading towards financial disaster.

The campaign financiers and privatization promoters include many firms that handle public as well as private union pension funds, among them American Express Institutional Services, Fidelity Management Trust Company, Merrill Lynch Asset Management, Morgan Stanley Asset Management, State Street Global Advisors and T. Rowe Price Associates.

The truth is that Social Security is basically sound and equipped to pay full ben-

efits for another 30 years. Yes,
Social Security's financing
mechanisms must be
adapted to accommodate Baby Boomers as
they retire—just as our
educational system

Wall Street brokers are preparing for a windfall - 2010





expanded when they reached school age. Even so, only modest adjustments are needed to keep the fund solvent and intact throughout "Individual
retirement accounts
give everyone
something to loathe."
—IUE

Vice President

Gloria Johnson

the 21st Century. And yet, two radical "individual retirement acount" plans were recently put forward by some members of the Social Security Advisory Council, a panel appointed by the federal government three years ago to review the program. Both groups propose high-risk reforms that would redirect Social Security funds to Wall Street, increase its administrative costs from less than 1 percent to at least 7 percent—and effectively end the most successful family protection program in history. Their schemes would cut Social Security benefits by 30 percent or more. They would force individuals to gamble with their own investment accountsand their futures. And they would destroy a system that guarantees a minimum level of income

"With 130 million people in the labor force, you could be staring at 130 million new accounts," a State Street principal was quoted as saying in an industry trade journal. (State Street, interestingly enough, recently formed a joint venture with pension consulting firm Watson

and security, and spreads the risks and rewards

evenly.

Wyatt Worldwide. Sylvester J. Schieber, a member of the Advisory Council and author of one of the Wall Street schemes, is a vice president of Watson Wyatt.)

The risky individual accounts schemes come at a time when private pension coverage is on the decline (only half of all U.S. workers are covered by private retirement plans) and Social Security is an increasingly important

WHY WOMEN STAND TO LOSE MOST

In the Social Security privatization deal, women have the losing hand. Here's why.

Women rely on Social Security more than men do. Working women earn less than working men, and only 13 percent of women aged 65 or older receive a private pension, compared with 33 percent of men. More women than men outlive their spouses, making them more likely to count on Social Security survivor benefits.

A survivor benefit is the greater of the person's own benefit or that of his or her deceased spouse—and for women it is usually the latter. Among women retiring in 2015, for example, only an estimated 20 percent will have earned benefits exceeding those of their husbands.

But if Social Security were privatized, women could no longer count on living independently in widowhood, according to women's pension expert Edith Fierst, a member of the Social Security Advisory Council. "The money accumulated in a personal savings account would belong to the person whose earnings were taxed, not to the spouse," she explains. "If a payment is to be made to the wife, it must come from the pocket of the one who earned it."

Divorced women have a lot to lose as well. Currently, those who were married at least 10 years are still eligible for the benefit levels of their spouses.

Under privatization, they would have to litigate to receive any benefits from the personally invested portion of the ex-husband's account.

Married women wouldn't even have the option to litigate to protect their share, Fierst adds, noting the inherent incentive for marriages to dissolve. Of course, if the wife doesn't act before her husband reaches age 65, it may be too late. The individual account is available only to the beneficiary, who has complete freedom to spend it as he or she wishes.

Women depend on Social Security more

- Women ore more likely thon men to outlive their spouses
- Only 1 3 percent of women oged 65 or older receive o privote pension, compored with 33 percent of men
- Of older women living olone, 37 percent rely on Social Security for at least
 90 percent of their income

Source: Twentieth Century Fund

perleast source of retirement income. Roughly 66 percent of all retirees today rely on Social Security benefits for a majority of their income—

compared with fewer than one half only 10 years ago.

But it gets worse. The transition from the current Social Security system to private accounts would require today's workers to pay *twice* for retirement—once to keep the present system solvent long enough to pay at least partial benefits to current and soon-to-be beneficiaries, and yet again to fund the new system. This "transition" would impose huge new tax increases estimated at \$12.5 to \$13 billion a year.

"Who do you think is going to pay the \$6 trillion dollars in new taxes over the next 72 years?" asked IUE Vice President Gloria Johnson at a standing-room-only press briefing in early January. "Individual retirement accounts give everyone something to loathe. Current retirees, the disabled, women and children, future retirees, taxpayer, employers—we all get creamed."

Johnson, who also is president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Machinists' President George Kourpias and Gerald Shea, assistant to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney,

are among six
Advisory Council
members who
flatly reject the
Wall Street-backed
individual account
schemes and urge a
common-sense
approach to preserving Social Security.
Their proposal would
make moderate adjustments that will ensure
solvency for 75 more

years—without dràstic

TELL THEM WHAT

Does your union have a tionships with financial advisors who are proming individual retirement accounts? If so, let ther know what you think of these risky schemes. To them that the retirement security of working families is on the line.

tax hikes or benefit cuts.

"When workers and their families hear the proposals to privatize Social Security, they worry because they don't have the time or the confidence they feel they would need to manage their own investment strategies," said Kourpias. "And they're very concerned about becoming prey to hoards of shyster consultants that are sure to follow any substantial diversion of Social Security funds into individual retirement accounts."

With 44 million Americans receiving benefits under Social Security—and more than a quarter of all retirees depending on it for at least 90 percent of their income—a Wall Street takeover is

hardly a sure bet. Social Security promises to be a hot topic of debate in Washington this year, and the labor movement will play a key role. By educating working families, reassuring young people and exposing the "privateers," unions will build grassroots support to preserve the program. "We know when we feel someone's hand in our pocket that we are probably getting our pockets picked," says Johnson.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Check out these other sources of information on Social Security and the behind-thescenes campaign to divert its funds to the stock market:

- For an exposé on Wall Street's drive to dismantle the system, read "The end of social security as we know it?" by Robert Dreyfuss, *Mother Jones* magazine, November/December 1996.
- In "Granny Bashing" (*In These Times*, Dec. 23, 1996), Dean Baker challenges false claims that Social Security and Medicare will bankrupt the nation.
- John B. Judis' "The Great Savings Scare" in *The New Republic* (Jan. 27, 1997) looks at the myths about savings and Social Security perpetuated by conservative think tanks.
- The Twentieth Century Fund has a guide called "The Basics: Social Security Reform." They can be reached at 212-535-4441 or their home page at http://epn.org/tcf.html.
- You can get more information on the plan proposed by six members of the Social Security Advisory Council as an alternative to radical individual account plans by visiting the AFL-CIO web page at http://www.aflcio.org.

TO NLRB OR NOT TO NLRB

WHEN THAT IS THE QUESTION, HERE ARE A FEW POINTS TO

CONSIDER... Organizing without a National Labor Relations Board election is not quick, not easy and not for everyone. But growing numbers of unions are bypassing the NLRB by organizing workers to demand voluntary recognition instead. Here's why. ■ The organizing isn't over until the first contract is won. These days, employers don't give that up without a fight—whether the union was certified through an NLRB election process or not. So if it's going to take a highly-charged mobilizing campaign to get the first agreement signed, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

why wait until the long and tedious NLRB process has run its course? Why not start now to build the power and momentum to

get the job done?

Times have changed. Employers are more hostile and more adept at using the NLRB process to sabotage elections, avoid bargaining and tie the union up in court. In the 1950s, 85 percent of all election victories resulted in a first contract. Today, that figure is less than one half.

That's why many organizers are opting for campaigns to win voluntary recognition—that is, to persuade employers to recognize the union based on a check of signed authorization cards ("card check") or an election supervised by a community or religious leader or other neutral third party. Even without an NLRB election, the recognition is legally binding as long as workers are organized into "appropriate units" as determined by the board.

Why do employers agree to voluntary recognition? For the same reason they sign contracts-to avoid public condemnation and a prolonged dispute. Organizing without the NLRB involves worker actions, community support, public demonstrations and the range of tactics used in contract campaigns.

But whether or not non-NLRB organizing is the right approach in your industry depends on a variety of factors, according to the AFL-CIO Organizing Department. Some points to consider: • With or without the NLRB process, all employers resist unionization—that's a given.

But what is the history in your jurisdiction? Have workers in the industry been successfully organized through NLRB elections? Have employers agreed to voluntary recognition?

• Do you have a long-term goal to organize a majority of workers in the industry? Unions in the janitorial, hotel and retail food industries have found that, while the initial battles for voluntary recognition may be long and hard, they can set a precedent that makes organizing the rest of the industry easier.

• What's the competition in the industry like? Some employers will be more easily convinced if the union is actively organizing their competitors.

• Are the employers partially unionized? Are they suppliers or contractors to unionized companies? Can union members be mobilized to support the organizing rights of nonunion workers?

• Are employers in the industry concerned about their public image? While service sector employers tend to be more dependent on the good will of the public, manufacturing companies are responsive to negative publicity as

well-as was the case at Richmark, the curtain manufacturing company in

Massachusetts that voluntarily recognized UNITE last year.

 How resilient and militant are the workers who are trying to organize? Workers may lawfully picket or strike for recognition. But workers who want to avoid the obstacles of the NLRB should keep in mind that if they engage in this kind of picketing for any length of time, particularly if it's

approaching 30 days, they may have to petition for an NLRB election.

Finally, whether you organize through traditional or nontraditional methods, serious and successful organizing requires a strategic plan, resources, talented organizers and a commitment from the rank and file. @

RAYMOND CROWELL/PAGE ONE



You can share your thoughts

and ideas by contacting

America@Work at

815 16th St., N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20006

Phone: 202-637-5010

Fax: 202-508-6908

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.co

Internet:

http://www.aficio.org.

Off Res

Button Up!

thention-grabbing buttons are a terrific medium for the union activist's message. One way to put them to good use is to shame employers by calling attention to their unsafe, unfair practices. Here is just a sampling of the wares displayed by union members in Massachusetts.

of the Frionor fish processing plant in New Bedford couldn't have been too happy when 125 employees arrived at work sporting these buttons. But the members of Teamsters Local 59 weren't about to hide their true feelings about new work rules that would have forced older women out of their jobs. In the end, the Teamsters prevailed by negotiating a new contract preempting the offensive rules.

RASH STATEMENT: Nursing home workers on Cape Cod came up with a hearty way to express their disapproval of the home's decision to switch from disposable to cloth diapers. Members of SEIU Local 767 at the Windsor Nursing Home protested that the cost-cutting measure was unsafe and uncomfortable for the home's residents. Apparently they have a dry sense of humor.

WORDS OF WARNING: When more than a thousand Steelworkers were locked out of their jobs several years ago, they wore these buttons to warn the public that Boston Gas Co. was jeopardizing their safety by operating without qualified workers. The 18-week lockout ended after mem-

bers of USWA Local 12003 won crucial support from local politicians and community leaders.

Do you have a clever button to share?

If so, send a sample along with a brief description of its purpose to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Or give us a call at 202-637-5010, fax at 202-508-6908 or e-mail at 12.53@compuserve.com (Internet: http://www.aflcio.org).

That's What Neighbors Are For

Island are bonding with the community by taking the lead on an issue near and dear to the hearts of their neighbors.

After state and local officials left Islander commuters out of a planned fare reduction,

a planned fare reduction,
Amalgamated Transit Union
Local 726 launched a strategic
drive to lower fares for its customers. The union proposed

high-speed bus lanes to

Manhattan and the use of larger buses, which combined would cut transit authority expenses by half and bus fares from

\$4 to \$2.

The idea has shot off like, well, a high-speed bus. Supporters of the "Fare Deal for Staten Island" range from local churches and politicians to nontraditional allies such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Realtors. Some 10,000 signatures were collected from residents and 2,500 from bus riders. Billboards and lawn signs touted the message. And commuters expressed their support during a town meeting and spirited MTA budget hearing.

The local expects the campaign to change the political landscape of Staten Island, a district that is 65 percent Democratic and represented by Republican Susan Molinari.

WORKERS' VOICES

UNDIANGRADI

received the video watched some or all of it, and two thirds of them reported that their support for the union's market share program had grown.

he UFCW and its California locals recently borrowed a technique from MTV in a new video designed to mobilize members around the need to organize to increase the union's "market share" in grocery stores. The video is an "unfiltered" collection of rank-and-file members' voices, without narration or voice-overs. In their own words, members talk about what the union has done for their families and explain how "market share means our share." Mixed in with the talking heads is footage of members at work, on picket lines, leafleting and meeting with local politicians.

The union mailed 70,000 copies of the video to its members in California, and followed up with a survey to gauge their reaction. The results: the vast majority of members who

Fights for Share with a sur-

Small

packages

ne of the most valuable tools in Houston's recent living wage campaign turned out to be a tiny little card that packed a powerful punch. Activists put information about the "\$6.50 for the City" initiative on small palm cards and left them with restaurant tips, passed them through gasoline station pay windows and slipped them to low-wage workers throughout the city. Through churches, community outreach and shopping center

: Minimum Wage



R the ordinance to le Minimum Wage canvassing, backers of the initiative gathered 47,000 qualified signatures and a place on January's special ballot. ©

HEY. Mickey!

HEY. Mickey!

HEY. Mickey!

Where'd Youget your

Wardrobe?

KATHE

DISNEY?

RICHARD GERHARTER/IMPACT VISUALS

animated protests

arment workers in the San Francisco Bay area are getting a wide range of support for their protests against abysmal working conditions, low wages, sexual harassment and worker degradation at several plants, including Rubber Stampede in Oakland, where workers walked off the job to protest labor rights violations.

Animators recently pitched in beautiful renditions of cartoon-character protest signs for pickets outside The Disney Store and Macy's, which were staged by the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, their Garment Workers' Justice Campaign and the Disney Week Coalition—including UNITE.

Picketers passed out fliers with a sample letter to Disney CEO Michael Eisner asking him to stop sweatshop operations in Haiti, where workers earn only 58 cents an hour, and at Rubber Stampede, which makes toy rubber stamps. Forty percent of its business comes from Disney.

The People's Court?

rustrated by contract demands that would have adversely affected the quality of care, 800 healthcare workers at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, N.Y., decided to put the matter up for a vote—in the community. During informational picketing one day last year, members of SEIU Local 1199RC set up ballot boxes at various stations around the huge university-medical center complex and distributed thousands of "ballots" to residents, patients, workers and pedestrians.

Passersby on their way to and from work were asked to vote on "the future of Rochester health care" and choose one of three options—to cut the quality of health care, to slash benefits or to invest in a quality healthcare work force. "By day's end, 1,314 ballots had been cast," says local president Bruce Popper. "Not surprisingly, voters overwhelmingly—by a 1,299 to 15 margin—favored a quality work force, sending a strong message to hospital management."

Union members ultimately settled a new two-year agreement that gives them a voice in the decisions involved in the hospital's restructuring.

he creator of a web site where "disgruntled" warkers can air their grievances may be on to something. Mare than 10,000 people visit the site (www.disgruntled.com) each manth to read cammentary, vent and solicit advice an work-related problems. The site has a unique feature for browsers who fear the bass may be lacking over their shoulders. If they click on the icon of an angry-looking boss, a page from an annual report—and the words "Our mission is to increase shareholder value"—appears on the screen.

Daniel S. Levine, a Bay Area reporter, came up with the idea a year ago after recagnizing the grawing frustrations of people who feel they are "working harder and langer far less, getting less satisfaction from their wark, getting more frustrated." The information superhighway, it seems, has patential as a new organizing vehicle. @



PATCHING THINGS UP After a Long Hard Strike

How to heal the wounds when you're back on the job

fter their strike at McDonnell-Douglas, members of Machinists District 837 encountered what they considered a "bad attitude" by some managers. In some parts of the plant, the work atmosphere was heavy with anxiety, mistrust and anger.

The hard feelings they describe are not at all uncommon after a lengthy strike. So how does a union ease the tensions and re-establish a healthy working relationship with the company?

At McDonnell Douglas, the union turned to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service for help, according to Rick Smith, assistant director of District 837.

After "a tough strike, everyone is angry, hostile, upset and tense when people go back to work," says FMCS Director John Calhoun Wells. "Those

bruised feelings and egos and wounds stay for a long time."

The FMCS conducted what it calls its "Putting It Back Together" program, designed to help workers and managers put the strike behind them.

The program consists of two-day workshops to help employees and management work through what caused the strike, identify what it takes to have an ideal working environment, agree on the

barriers that exist in the plant and develop concrete actions to overcome them.

at McDonnell-Douglas

On the first day, representatives of the union and management separately identify the characteristics of their ideal labor-management environment. Then the two sides come together, share their lists and develop a common set of characteristics and come to a consensus on the five most important ones.

On the second day, after learning and practicing positive communications, the two sides

explore how to solve problems using "force-field analysis," which identifies forces that support or hinder their top five characteristics. Joint teams analyze the forces at work with each characteristic and report back to the full group, which then decides concrete steps to make their ideal environment a reality.

"Putting It Back Together" is a relatively new program that was pilot-tested at WCI Steel in Warren, Ohio. After a 54-day strike by Steelworkers in 1995, FMCS mediators got the two sides together away from the plant to discuss their working relationship. Both sides agreed to concentrate on improving communications, especially between shop-floor stewards and supervisors. They set up two joint committees, a steering committee to oversee a communications

training program and a committee to train managers and employees in every department in problem-solving and communications skills.

"Putting It Back Together" is just one of the programs available to unions from FMCS, an independent agency with more than 70 field offices around the country. FMCS, which currently is involved in mediating roughly 5,000 disputes, also

No hard feelings: Machinists are putting it back together

provides grants to start labor-management cooperation groups.

New brochures available from FMCS include "Labor-Management Relations for the 21st Century," "Alternative Dispute Resolution Services to Government" and "Building Labor-Management Relationships: A Winning Combination.'

For information, contact your local FMCS office or the agency headquarters at 2100 K St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20427. Phone: 202-606-8100.

- James B. Parks

OUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. One of our larger employers has been targeting its drug-testing policy mostly at a unionized segment of the plant population. What gives?

A. We don't know what's motivating this employer, but if it is more aggressively enforcing against union workers a drugtesting policy that also covers nonunion groups, it may be

committing an unfair labor practice. Your union should make sure the policy is being applied fairly and evenhandedly—and grieve it if it isn't.

More generally, it is an unfair labor practice for an employer to unilaterally implement a drug-testing program for current union-represented employees unless, during bargaining, the union waived the right to object through a particular "zipper clause" or otherwise. Drug testing of job applicants, on the other hand, is not a mandatory subject of bargaining, and so an employer usually can start such a program for them mid-contract.

When bargaining over how such a program will be implemented, you may want to consider pushing for an employee assistance program or other protections and recourse short of discipline for bargaining unit members who test positive.

Q. How can I find out whether there are any OSHA regulations covering specific work procedures in different iobs?

A. Most OSHA regulations can be found, with a little persistence, at the agency's Web site at http:// www.osha.gov. OSHA can also be contacted at 202-219-8151.

Q. An injured mem-ber needs regular time off for physical therapy, but management is balking. What can we do?

A. It depends. In many states, workers' comp laws require at least partial payment for lost time for medical treatment. If his or her condition is serious, the member may

be eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid leave, taken in small increments, under the Family and Medical Leave Act. And if the injury is a disability, he or she may have certain rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you'd like to know more, check out "Representing Injured Workers," a new course at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, March 16-21. Call 301-431-5422 for information. @

On The Agenda For '97

- Regional Organizing Conferences At 16 sites across the country this spring, national and local union leaders will outline how they are winning with new organizing strategies and structures. Topics include strategic organizing campaigns, models of successful organizing, community-based cooperative campaigns and the AFL-CIO's Changing to Organize, Right to Organize and other programs. For more information, call the AFL-CIO Organizing Department at 202-637-6205.
- Working Women Outreach The federation will conduct extensive surveys on women's workplace and family policy goals and visit hundreds of worksites to show how unions can benefit working women. Women who are organizing will share ideas in a national meeting planned around Labor Day. Contact the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department at 202-637-5064.
- **Grassroots Mobilization** Building on the successful Labor '96 program, union activists will continue to set up meetings with members of Congress in their home districts—part of a broad program to develop grassroots action networks and hold elected leaders accountable to working families. For information, call Suzanne Granville at 202-637-5357.
- **Union Cities** This new program will work through the AFL-CIO's Central Labor Councils to bring local unions together around common goals for organizing, political action, member mobilization and community coalition building. Contact Scott Reynolds at 202-637-5226.
- Union Summer '97 Young workers and students will be back this year to pour their energy into organizing and community activism. Union Summer internships may be longer than three weeks this year, focusing on longer-term organizing projects. Applications will be available in late winter.

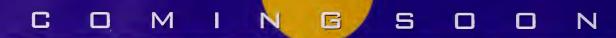
Meanwhile, a new year-round youth program is in the works. The program, which will get young people involved in all levels of the labor movement, is a fast, nonbureaucratic track into the front lines of the labor movement. For more information, call Liann Ainsworth at 202-639-6225.

■ Economics Education — The AFL-CIO Economics Education program will focus on how economic policies can work for workers—not just Wall Street profiteers. A variety of education and training materials will become available beginning in May. Contact the Education Department at 202-637-5141.

1997

Conventions, conferences and meetings of AFL-CIO international affiliates, state central bodies and fraternal organizations

DATE	ORGANIZATION	PLACE
FE8. 10~11	BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FEB. 13	METAL TRADES EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FE8. 13-14	MARITIME TRADES EXECUTIVE BOARD	LOS ANGELES
FE8. 14	UNION LABEL & SERVICE TRADES EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FEB. 15	FAST EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FE8. 15	PUBLIC EMPLOYEE DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	LOS ANGELES
FEB. 15	TRANSPORTATION TRADES EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FE8. 15	NCSC EXECUTIVE 80ARD	LOS ANGELES
FEB. 17-20	AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING	LOS ANGELES
FEB. 21-23	CLUW OFFICER COUNCIL	LOS ANGELES
MARCH 5-6	IUD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE	WASHINGTON
MARCH 10~12	LOUISIANA STATE FED	BATON ROUGE
APRIL 7-11	ILWU	HONOLULU
APRIL 9-12	AFL-CIO/CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS/UCLEA	TORONTO
APRIL 30-MAY 2	ARIZONA STATE FED	PRESCOTT
MAY (T8A)	AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	WASHINGTON, DC
MAY 1-2	MICHIGAN STATE FED	DEARBORN
MAY 14-15	AFL-CIO SECRETARY-TREASURERS	PHOENIX
MAY 16-19	AFL-CIO UNION INDUSTRIES SHOW	PHOENIX
MAY 21-26	COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS	NEW ORLEANS
JUNE 9-11	IDAHO STATE FED	BURLEY
JUNE 9-12	AFL-CIO UNION LAWYERS CONFERENCE	CHICAGO
JUNE 11-14	APRI NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE	LAS VEGAS
JUNE 16-18	MUSICIANS	LAS VEGAS
JUNE 30~JULY 1	CWA	LAS VEGAS
JULY 9-11	WASHINGTON STATE FED	WENATCHEE
JULY 14-18	IFPTE	TORONTO
JULY 14-21	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	PROVIDENCE, R.I.
AUG. 5-6	AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	CHICAGO
AUG. 7-10	ASIAN-PACIFIC-AMERICAN LABOR ALLIANCE	SAN FRANCISCO
AUG. 13-15	IOWA STATE FED	WATERLOO
AUG. 15-16	NEW MEXICO STATE FED	LAS CRUCES
AUG. 18-22	OCAW	LAS VEGAS
AUG. 18-22	AFGE	ANAHEIM, CALIF.
AUG. 21-23	MONTANA STATE FED	GREAT FALLS
AUG. 26	HEAT & FROST INSULATORS & ASBESTOS WORKERS	LAS VEGAS
SEPT. 3-5	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FED	MYRTLE 8EACH
SEPT. 3-5	NORTH CAROLINA STATE FED	ATLANTIC 8EACH
SEPT. 8-10	PUBLIC EMPLOYEE DEPARTMENT	HERSHEY, PA.
SEPT. 15-17	MINNESOTA STATE FED	ST. PAUL
SEPT. 17-19	CONNECTICUT STATE FED	HARTFORD
SEPT. 19-21	NE8RASKA STATE FED	GRAND ISLAND
SEPT. 15-21	FLORIDA STATE FED	LAKE BUENA VISTA
SEPT. 22-23	OREGON STATE FED	SALEM
SEPT. 22-25	AFL-CIO 22ND 8IENNIAL CONVENTION	PITTS8URGH
SEPT. 26-27	COLORADO STATE FED	DENVER
SEPT. 27-30	TENNESSEE STATE FED	NASHVILLE
SEPT. 29-OCT. 3	TRANSPORT WORKERS	LAS VEGAS
OCT. 14-17	FLIGHT ATTENDANTS	PORTLAND, ORE.
OCT. 15-17	WEST VIRGINIA STATE FED	CHARLESTON
OCT. 27-29	ALA8AMA STATE FED	MOSILE
NOV. 5-7	MAINE STATE FED	ROCKPORT
NOV. 6-9	CLUW 9TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION	SEATTLE
DEC. 3-5	INDIANA STATE FED	INDIANAPOLIS



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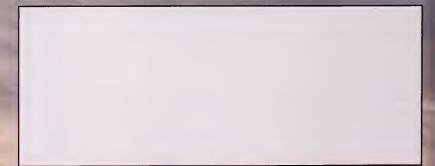
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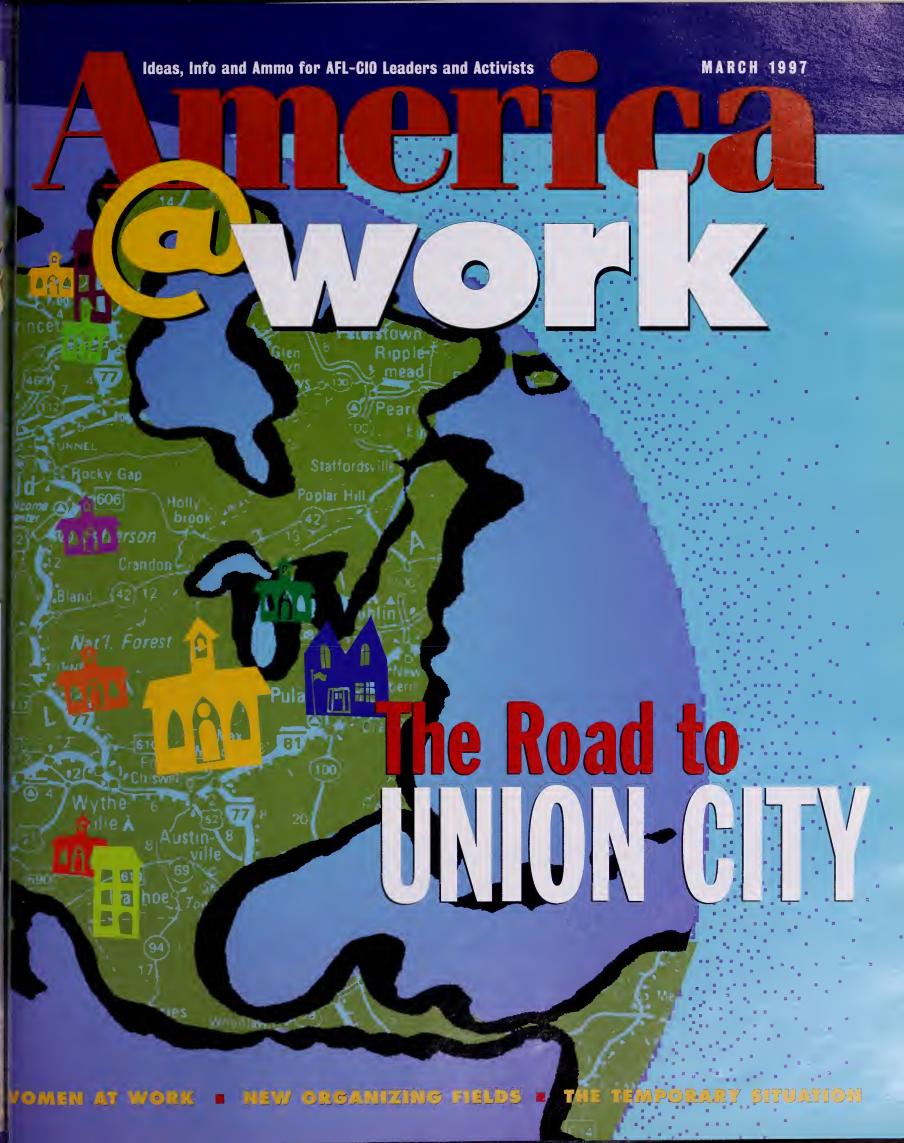












Ideas and Views From You

NEW ORGANIZING IDEAS

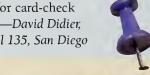
(a) Your monthly publication is most informative, but I wish to point out some of the companies that have not been mentioned lately: IBM, Microsoft, Apple Computer, Silicon Graphics, Motorola, INTEL, America OnLine, Hewlett-Packard, Netscape, Dell Computer, Gateway 2000, US Robotics, Compaq, Seagate, Sun Microsystems, Texas Instruments—and I could go on and on. I can well understand John Sweeney's focus on more traditional industries for organizing efforts, but I would like to think that these highly profitable companies would not be overlooked. Because of the "downsizing" that has occurred, employees are no less anxious about their jobs at these high-tech companies than in other industries.—B. Noel Myrick, former (downsized) IBM employee, Tucson, Ariz.

(a) Has there been any thought for an effort aimed at developing a new musical culture for the new organizing push? Traditionally, music and organizing have gone hand in hand. Just as the AFL-CIO is seeking to build a bridge with the academic community, it is important to build a bridge with the music community. For example, an updated rap version of the old Woody Guthrie song "Talkin' Union" could go a long way toward spreading the union message.— William A. Herbert, CSEA/AFSCME, New York

@ On whether to organize without the NLRB (Feb. issue): Our revital-

ized organizing department is heading in that direction. We have experienced the kind of delays associated with NLRB elections and it would seem that bypassing the board is the way to go. Once we get to the point when we are ready for elections, we will

be pushing for card-check recognition.—David Didier, UFCW Local 135, San Diego



A VIEW FROM ABROAD

@ We are extremely impressed with the great job your organization is doing in reunionizing workers in your country. Here in New Zealand we are also undertaking a similar process as a consequence of the labor laws introduced by the right wing government in 1991.-Mike Jackson, National Secretary, National Distribution Union, New Zealand

unions@work, our members@work,

When you see

and collective power in our

communities@work.

that's when you see



What's your point of view? Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908.

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com. Internet: http://www.aflcio.org.

HOW ABOUT ...?

Those of us struggling to produce visually engaging and well-written union communications appreciate the direction of your magazine and your attempt to balance substance and accessibility. "Chain Saw Reactions," your article on Wall Street speculators in the January issue, is a good example of a piece that presents useful information in an exciting way. How about a piece on how public-sector unions are confronting privatization and attacks upon government services?—Janet Coffman, SEIU Local 1000, Sacramento, Calif.

The Social Security system is a model of good government. Perhaps the very success of this program explains why a whole indus-

CONTINUE THE CONTRACT

try has grown up to terrorize Americans into believing that Social Security is approaching a crisis (Feb. issue). The financial industry is spending millions of dollars on think tanks and public forums to lay the intellectual foundations for privatization. We should continue our most fundamental contract we have with one another: If an American works, and then can't work because of age, that citizen will not have to live in poverty.—Herbert Miller, Retired, AFSCME, Franklin, Pa.



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America@Work (ISSN 1091594X) is designed to inspire and support frontline union leaders and activists with tips, tools and news you can use in the fight to build a strong voice for America's working families. It is the official publication of the American Federation of Labor and Cangress of Industrial Organizations and is issued monthly. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C.

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THE ROAD TO UNION CITY

Working through their central labor councils, local unions are joining forces to rebuild the labor movement and make their communities a better place to live and work

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Currents

Bringing bad things to light

eneral Electric's current chairman is making GE's legendary union-busting CEO, Lemuel Boulware, look like a teddy bear.

John F. Welch has declared war on GE workers, saying the company doesn't need a "third party" to give people dignity and voice.

After rejecting outright three top bargaining goals put forth by the 14 unions that make up the Coordinated Bargaining Committee, Welch dared the unions to strike, saying GE was the "best prepared company in the world to take a strike." He's asked managers for monthly updates on strike preparations.

The AFL-CIO and the GE unions, representing 46,000 workers, plan a wide-ranging campaign using corporate and investment strategies. They're calling on Welch to use GE's enormous profits—\$7.28 billion in 1996—to provide secure jobs and avoid a costly and unnecessary dispute.

On a roll in Maryland

tate employees in Maryland are rolling the union on. Next up to vote are the 2,120 health care workers who will decide in a spring election whether to be represented by the AFT's Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals.

In the months following last year's executive order granting Maryland state employees the right to bargain, AFSCME won four elections covering more than 25,000 workers in bargaining units for administrative, technical and clerical, health and human services, social and human services and labor and trades. A coalition of AFSCME and the Teamsters also won an election covering public safety workers.

The coalition of unions organizing in Maryland also scored a slam dunk when the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court recently dismissed the state chamber of commerce's lawsuit challenging the executive order.

FIRST CONTRACT IS SWEET JUSTICE

ith their newly-ratified first contract in hand, 160 UNITE members at the Richmark curtain factory in Everett, Mass., continue to show how you can win with community solidarity—and that when employers violate the rights of workers trying to organize, the labor movement will be at their door.

The new three-year pact includes an immediate wage increase, paid sick and vacation days, strong arbitration and seniority provisions, a ban on homework and strict limits on subcontracting.

The Richmark workers got help from the community last year when 40 of them walked out over their right to organize. Local churches collected food and money for the



Signed and sealed: Richmark workers cross the finish line with a first contract

workers. Latino community centers volunteered their meeting facilities. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO rallied labor support while Jobs with Justice helped coordinate leafleting and picketing. And 13 community leaders were arrested after they refused to leave Richmark's main office. Two days later, the company recognized the union and reinstated eight fired workers.

Overnite Success

hen transportation workers in Macon, Ga., recently voted 11 to 7 in favor of IBT representation, it marked the 25th victory in a three-year nationwide campaign to organize 9,000 Overnite workers. Today, the Teamsters represent 27 percent of the workers and are seeking bargaining orders for another 12 percent.

By involving rank-and-file members in the campaign, the union has prevailed in election after election—even while up against a company willing to spend unlimited resources on legal battles to defeat the union.

When Overnite President Jim Douglas quietly retired last month, many speculated that his fierce resistance to the union was behind the departure. "Jim Douglas was one of our best organizing tools," admits IBT President Ron Carey. "But he shouldn't expect any sympathy cards from us. He won't be missed."

Driving home a 25th win: Teamsters





Tales from the workplace: A private meeting with Vice President Gore

STRONG WORDS FOR WORKERS

ice President Gore traveled to Los Angeles in February for a regular appearance at the AFL-CIO Executive Council winter meetingwhich included an anything-butroutine exchange of words.

The vice president sat down for a private session with six workers from around the country, who shared their personal stories of lives disrupted by employers who routinely flout federal labor laws.

Mike Boudreaux is a sheet metal worker from the Avondale shipyard in New Orleans whose coworkers voted for union representation, but four years and 400 unfair labor practice complaints later still don't have it. Elisa Lopez is one of 235 workers in San Francisco who lost their jobs two years ago when Sprint shut down its Spanish-speaking operation to avoid an NLRB election. Cathy Sharpe is a hospital nurse in San Diego and one of 2,500 workers whose employer refuses to bargain with their union. Julia Lopez is a janitor at the University of Southern California whose job was suddenly subcontracted to an antiunion company. Margaret Jane Turney is a cocktail waitress at the Santa Fe Hotel in Las Vegas, where a union election victory in 1993 has been stymied by the hotel's delay factics. And John Robledo is a trucker from Los Angeles who works for Overnite, a national company accused of 400 labor law violations to prevent workers from organizing.

Gore spoke forcefully on behalf of workers' rights. "The right to organize is a fundamental right in America, but it is a right that is too often violated," he said in a press briefing. "The president and I stand on the side of working men and women who want to exercise their right to organize. So we're going to send a message: If you want to do business with the federal government, you had better maintain a safe workplace and respect civil, human and union rights." The vice president went on to announce new regulations that would bar companies who violate workers' rights from obtaining federal contracts. @

News From Detroit

triking Detroit newspaper workers shifted strategy last month with an unconditional offer to end a 19-month walkout and return to work.

The offer put the Detroit News and Free Press in the position of having to either rehire the workers or face a whopping \$80 million-a-year back-pay bill if the NLRB rules the strike was due to an unfair labor practice.

The six unions and 2,000 members emphasized that the strike may have ended but their resolve to win a fair contract has not. In fact, the unions have raised the stakes with a bold strategy to take the campaign everywhere Knight-Ridder and Gannett operate-in Detroit, across the country and throughout the world.

SPOTLIGHT

ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN

The most essential ingredient to accomplishing any mission is a plan. Just ask the Florida AFL-CIO. In the past three years, they've boosted membership by 10,000, mobilized support for organizing and forged community coalitions around legislative issues—all according to a strategic plan to move into the 21st century.



The strategic plan was born

after Florida AFL-CIO President Marilyn Lenard convened a special task force, which crafted goals and objectives in five key areas—affiliations, member and public education, organizing, political and legislative activity and fundraising.

"Our strategic plan has helped give us a common vision about the future," Lenard says. Florida's unions are demonstrating their shared vision by affiliating with the state fed in growing numbers—and in other ways. In recent months, they rallied at the Miami Herald in support of Detroit News strikers and marched to Tallahassee with Quincy Farms workers trying to organize into the UFW. They played a key role in getting out the vote for President Clinton and proworker candidates for Congress. And they are enthusiastically participating in the state fed's political training programs.

Lenard and Secretary-Treasurer Anthony C. Hill, who also serves in the state legislature, expected about 50 CLC officers at the most recent political retreat, but that number quickly doubled.

"We've been able to mobilize CLCs and rank-and-file members to deal with issues at the local level," says Lenard. That is helping the state fed develop legislative goals around economic development, welfare reform and job training.

Its strategic plan is not the Florida AFL-CIO's only unique feature. It is also the only state fed in the country with a woman and an African-American as its principal officers.

Line Item Pays Off in Michigan

ichigan's AFSCME Council 25 is quickly reaping dividends from their multimillion dollar organizing investment.

Already this year, 693 nurses at McClaren Hospital in Flint, Michigan, joined the union along with 1,400 non-technical employees.

"After the leadership put a line item for organizing in the budget—\$1 million a year for four years—we just went out and organized," said Flo Walker, council president. That's what you call a growth fund.

Currents

New Venue, New Directions

rganizing was front and center during the winter meeting of the AFL-ClO Executive Council last month, which for the first time in 70 years was held outside the resort town of Bal Harbour, Fla.

Meeting in Los Angeles—a site chosen because it is home to some of the most aggressive organizing in the country—council members spent the week focusing on how to turn the labor movement around.

In addition to "Ask A Working Woman" (pp. 11–14), "Union Cities" (pp. 15–17) and other new organizing initiatives (pp. 18–19), the council announced strategic campaigns against Sharp HealthCare, New Otani Hotel, American Red Cross, American President Lines, General Electric, *Detroit Free Press* and *News* and the Frontier Hotel.

They passed 26 resolutions, which included commitments to stand with Alexis Herman in her struggle to become the first African-American secretary of labor and to oppose the balanced budget amendment and modification of the Consumer Price Index.

And they heard from 14 elected leaders, including Vice President Al Gore and House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, who vowed to lead the fight against NAFTA expansion.

In Memoriam

The labor movement lost a principled and compassionate leader in February when Albert Shanker, president of the AFT for 23 years, died at the age of 68. He will be remembered for his relentless pursuit of educational excellence for students and dignity for teachers. Edward McElroy, AFT's secretary-treasurer, will serve in the top leadership position until May, when the union's executive committee meets to appoint a successor.

Upping the Ante

If striking workers at the Frontier Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas have their way, the hotel may have to cash in all of its chips.

At a rally in Las Vegas last month, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney announced that union leaders plan to meet with Nevada Gov. Bob Miller and testify before the state legislature to have Frontier's license pulled because of alleged illegal conduct, including felony wiretapping and obstruction of justice.

The Elardi family, which owns the hotel, forced 550 members

of HERE Local 226 out on strike in 1991 with demands to eliminate pensions and job security and cut wages and health benefits. More than five years later, not a single union member has crossed the picket line.

IAM Elects New Leaders

Machinists have elected R. Thomas Buffenbarger to succeed retiring IAM President George Kourpias. Buffenbarger, 46, has served as IAM vice president since 1993. He takes office July 1, along with re-elected Secretary-Treasurer Don Wharton and seven vice presidents.

A \$3 Million Settlement

It took more than 10 years, but the Laborers won a \$3.1 million settlement for 190 workers at Outboard Marine Corp. in Calhoun, Ga. After a short walkout in 1986, the workers made themselves available for work. But OMC had hired replacement workers and delayed recalling strikers; some didn't return to work until 1989. The settlement includes back pay, bonuses and interest.

any of my beliefs about workers and the labor movement have roots in the Catholic social teachings I studied at the old Xavier Labor School in New York during my high school and college years.

One of those beliefs is that there is dignity in work.

Another is that working people have the right to respect and a living wage and should not be cast aside when the last drop of energy and effort has been wrung from them.

The Xavier School taught me another lesson: The economy should serve people, and not the other way around.

These lessons were uppermost in my mind last fall, when I was among the labor leaders from around the world who had the extraordinary privilege of meeting with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome. As we spoke about the problems facing workers, I felt a renewed sense of commitment to what is clearly the greatest challenge of our day: To shape a global marketplace that serves people and provides the rewards to which every worker is entitled.

Our Mission In the Global Marketplace

by John J. Sweeney



Traditionally, in our organizing efforts, we have received strong support from religious institutions and leaders from every faith. Organizing is a practical expression of the obligations of those who are more fortunate to those who are less fortunate. It is, as Pope John Paul II described in his encyclical *On Human Work*, "honest collaboration with each other in subordination to the common good."

Now, the task is more challenging—but even more urgent. For working people around the world, globalization has brought economic insecurity, not advancement.

But let me be clear: The problem really isn't the new global economy. The problem is how corporations are responding to it.

Too many companies are taking the low road in international competition. They are cutting their work forces, their wages and benefits. They scour the globe in search of places where working people have low wages and no rights. We see this in Indonesia, for instance, where young people work at appallingly low wages to make running shoes that are sold at appallingly high prices to young people in our own country.

As I told the Pontifical Council, I believe our religious institutions should address clearly and without compromise the moral dimensions of economic life. They should challenge those who, by their business dealings and corporate decision-making, push people to the margins of society. They should teach that justice demands more than charity, and that it must be practiced in our policies as well as preached in our pulpits.

I believe that if we work together—unions, churches and all people of good will throughout the world—we can create a global economy that lifts the living standards and honors the human dignity of every man, woman and child.

WHERE HAVE

CORPORATE AMERICA HAS REPLACED SO MANY

ALL THE

FULL-TIME JOBS WITH "CASUAL" ONES THAT

REAL JOBS

TEMPORARY AND CONTINGENT WORKERS ARE NOW

GONE?

NEARLY ONE QUARTER OF THE ENTIRE U.S. WORK FORCE

andra Jones (not her real name) thought she was on to a good thing. The textile worker in South Carolina had heard day-shift work was available in a modern distribution center, with pay advertised at \$9.70 per hour plus health insurance and a 401(k) plan. It was a welcome change from her night-shift job, which paid \$6.80 an hour and was "very hard, very hot, extremely noisy and dirty, with a definite sweat-shop mentality." There was just one hitch. Jones was able to get the job only by going through a temporary service.

"I had the idea that if I proved myself I would be hired

as soon as their commitment to the agency was fulfilled," Jones said. "I was wrong. Once in, I found that about 90 percent of the employees were temporaries just like me, and that it was usually eight months to three years before you were hired permanently and paid the advertised rate—and then you'd be moved to evenings or nights for another year or more."

Now Jones not only is making less than in her textile job, she no longer has health insurance. "They didn't make any promises, I know," she said. "But there is something wrong with this. They use this to avoid paying benefits."



A high-visibility campaign: Preserving good jobs at Yale

Jones is hardly the first to notice that something has gone terribly awry for working Americans. Employers who once relied on "contingent" workers strictly for short-term projects, during peak workloads or in emergency situations have discovered a

whole new way to reduce their labor costs by creating what corporate executives like to

call a "more flexible work force" (translation: workers to whom they owe no benefits and make no commitments.) In fact, corporate America has replaced so many full-time jobs with "casual" ones that temporary, subcontracted, part-time and self-employed workers are now estimated to be nearly one quarter of the entire U.S. work force.

Once concentrated in clerical and light industrial sectors, contingent work is booming today in health care, high-tech, blue collar and managerial fields; even scientists and executives are being placed through temp agencies. Ironically, many workers find themselves in the same job-but with less pay, little or no health insurance or pensions and no job security.

In industries like high-tech and telecommunications, where corporations have laid off

NEW HAVEN

A COMMUNITY SAVES ITS GOOD JOBS

icture a city where one in every seven workers has the same employer. And imagine that while this city has come to be the seventh poorest in the nation, the dominant employer is a \$4.6 billion outfit that doubled its wealth over the last 10 years—yet last year forced its employees out on strike by demanding the freedom to

replace permanent jobs with subcontracted and temporary ones.

Sound like a company town? In a sense it is. But it's not a turn-ofthe-century Appalachian coal town. It's New Haven, Connecticut, home to the second richest school in the country-Yale University.

Last year, Yale managers meant business when they came to the bargaining table with demands for a more transitory, "casual" work force. Had they prevailed, full-time permanent workers eventually would have been in the minority on campus. But Yale hadn't counted on fierce opposition from an entire town-mobilized by

the 3,700 members of HERE Locals 34 and

35 in a winning fight against the erosion of good jobs.

"The community came to realize that Yale jobs are the good jobs in the city of New Haven," says Local 34 President Laura Smith. "And they had to take a stand to preserve quality jobs and keep our community strong."

The union's year-long campaign began with town-hall-style meetings in city neighborhoods and suburbs, where community "stakeholders"—residents, elected officials, religious and community leaders, small business owners and property owners—heard from union members about the impact of Yale's proposals on jobs in the community. Union members reinforced the message through bumper stickers, mailings to community groups, leafleting throughout the

city and media outreach. University profes-

sors sided with the workers, newspapers ran cartoons deriding university officials, and more than 100 individual clergy members signed a powerful statement condemning Yale that was published as an ad in the New Haven Register.

At the same time, the union organized the university's casual workers (those without permanent schedules), who voted 61-2 for representation in an NLRB election. While the university tried to stall recognition for the casual workers, members kept the pressure on with actions and protests and visits to university board members to make their case.

During the course of the campaign, members of both locals staged separate month-long strikes and two major rallies. During one, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and 312 union members and supporters were arrested. Days later, Yale settled with the unions.

Yale agreed to grant immediate recognition to the casuals and to create "pipelines" through which casual and part-time workers can become permanent employees with benefits after working a set number of hours. Backing off their demand for a subcontracting juggernaut, Yale also agreed to preserve dining hall jobs and maintain extra work opportunities for the part-time workers who make up 75 percent of the university's custodial staff. In addition, the new Yale contracts include 10-year no-layoff language as part of "the best job security language in the country," says Local 35 President Bob Proto.

For subcontract employees who work at Yale, primarily in food service establishments, the union also negotiated a \$7 per hour minimum wage, plus 3 percent per year. The minimum-wage effort was boosted by the fact that Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, who sits on the Yale board, had supported a similar drive in his own city government.

LILYTAHW

happen to

DECENT JOBS?

East Rock/Prospect Hill Neighborhood Meeting Come to an

and make your voice heard!

Tuesday, October 8, 7:00 p.m. Church of the Redeemer 185 Cold Spring St. (cor. Whitney Ave.)

hundreds of thousands of permanent employees to appease Wall Street, some "downsized" employees are back at their desks, doing the same work—but employed now by companysponsored temporary agencies that are sometimes housed under the same roof as the parent company. In the public sector as well, as state and local governments award contracts to the lowest bidder, workers are finding they have to vie for their old jobs-only at lower pay and fewer benefits. In a bizarre twist, workers in already privatized janitorial and security jobs, for example, now could wind up doing their old jobs as workfare recipients.

As unfair as that seems, current laws and regulations aren't helping much. For contingent workers, accessing social services is difficultand organizing to improve conditions is almost impossible.

Today, on a variety of fronts, the labor movement is challenging those rules and fighting for legislation to help low-wage contingent workers. After convincing Congress to pass a minimum wage increase and portable health benefits last year, unions continue to push for state and local living wage ordinances, wage parity between contingent and permanent workers, increasing pension portability and expanding unemployment insurance.

The AFL-CIO recently filed a lawsuit against California's Employment Development Department aimed at eliminating an antiquated waiting period that has stymied efforts by hundreds of thousands of intermittently employed workers to qualify for benefits.

And in December, the AFL-CIO petitioned the NLRB to overhaul two major provisions of employment law-one defining who employs temps, the other granting employers veto power over organizing drives. The NLRB litigation could close loopholes that for decades have allowed companies to thwart organizing drives by transforming permanent employees into "independent contractors."

At the same time, unions are trying traditional and nontraditional strategies to organize and represent the contingent work force. HERE Locals 34 and 35 won an unprecedented victory for "casual" workers at Yale University by organizing them during the heat of a contract campaign for permanent employees and by galvanizing the New Haven community to fight Yale's effort to decimate permanent jobs.

Some unions have gone "back to the future" to tailor hiring hall features borrowed from the building and maritime trades to fit occupational groups including janitors, food servers, printers and performing artists.

The Communications Workers has established employment centers featuring an aggressive apprenticeship and certification process that

helps laid-off AT&T and Baby Bell workers keep their skills current. Some recent Baby Bell contracts provide employer contributions to the centers and mandate that the companies subcontract only with firms that hire through the centers.

Other unions try multi-employer bargaining strategies. The Screen Actors Guild, the Writers Guild and the Directors Guild have grown during the last 20 years, even as the industry restructured, by negotiating multiemployer pacts that have protected members' incomes. Multiemployer contracts also protect contingent workers in the building trades, the garment industry and janitorial services.

In health care, the Service Employees is developing strategies incorporating political and legislative action to organize and represent home-care workers in the public and private sector-many of whom are considered independent contractors.

Public-sector unions are challenging privatization and increasingly "following the work" by organizing employees in privatized work sites. In some jurisdictions, unions are helping groups of members bid for contracts them-

SOME "DOWN SIZED" **EMPLOYEES ARE BACK** AT THEIR DESKS, DOING THE SAME JOBS-BUT NOW EMPLOYED BY TEMPORARY AGENCIES.

MISFORTUNES





BY NICOLE HOLLANDER





Mobilizing in New Haven: Rev. Jesse Jackson and the AFL-CIO's Rich Trumka lead a march

selves in order to keep their own jobs.

On the cutting edge are organizations like the National Writers Union/UAW, which organizes freelancers, provides benefits, contract advice and grievance services and campaigns for fairness in the rapidly-changing publishing industry. And huge associations of high-tech employees, while less oriented toward traditional representation, provide access to jobs, information on grievances and networking.

National advocacy groups like 9to5 and ACORN, as well as regional and local organizations like Working Partnerships USA in the Silicon Valley, are working at the grass roots to influence policy, raise public awareness and support organizing efforts among low-wage workers from clerical temps to day laborers.

For Sandra Jones, meanwhile, these efforts don't come a moment too soon. Her company is "taking advantage of working people while the



president and many other elected officials are trying to reform welfare and maintain good health care for all Americans," she said. "A lot of the need would vanish if employers were forced to bear their share of the burden."

SILICON VALLEY

A GLIMPSE OF THE NATION'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

organizing contingent workers will require new strategies, new support systems—perhaps even new structures. But how do we create them? Unions in several states, working through their central labor councils, are forming new organizations to pave the way.

One of them is the South Bay (California) Labor Council's Working Partnerships USA. Two years after its formation as a nonprofit arm of the labor council with its own community-based advisory board, Working Partnerships is about to establish a new union for temporary workers in the Silicon Valley.

Temporary, contract, part-time and short-term jobs are taking over the employment market in California's high-tech bastion, according to a Working Partnerships study released last year. The study, "Shock Absorbers in the Flexible Economy: The Rise of Contingent Employment in Silicon Valley," found that overall employment in Santa Clara County declined 2 percent in the last five years, while temporary agency employment grew 48 percent. It also found that temporary workers' wages have declined as their numbers increased.

"Contingent workers have come out of the woodwork to tell us their stories and help us formulate a code of conduct for industry," says the South Bay Council's Amy Dean. "The temps we've spoken to so far say they'd join our organization in a red-hot minute."

The initial "demonstration project" calls for Service Employees Local 715 and Working Partnerships to enter into an agreement with West Valley Community College, which will provide software training for administrative assistants. The new union could then dispatch members to unionized work sites covered by multiemployer agreements. Members of the new union who got permanent jobs could still maintain their benefits through the union.

Working Partnerships will spend the next few months building

support for the project, and intends to formally launch the new union in September.

Working Partnerships also has held discussions with Sign and Display Local 510, which runs a hiring hall for cabinet makers, painters and sign makers in the high-tech trade show industry. Local 510 members work alongside lower-paid freelance "techies," supplied by agencies such as Kelly and Manpower, who install and maintain computers for the trade shows.

"I think the time is right for for a new kind of organizing effort in Silicon Valley," says Local 510 President Bob Owen. "There's a whole generation of workers who are disillusioned about the high-tech industry. Years ago these workers were given not only medical insurance but health spas and softball teams. Well, the spa is now closed to everyone but the executives, the softball teams were gone years ago—and they've cut down on the insurance benefits. There's an awareness among workers that maybe they got hoodwinked."

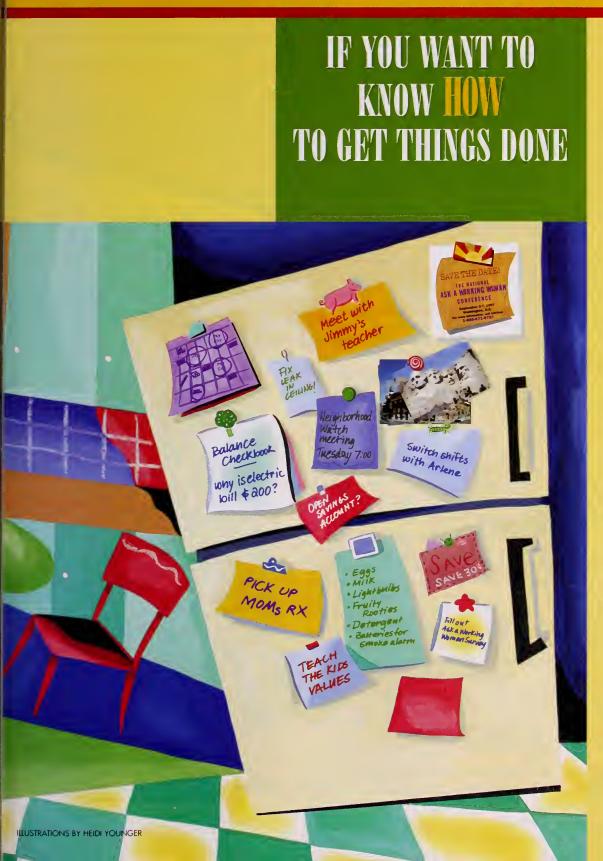
Working Partnerships and Local 510 are discussing questions like how to rethink dues checkoff and create a relevant benefit structure for contingent workers. "We'll need a carefully created strategic plan and a lot of cooperation between unions," Owen says.

"Our goal is to create the best region for organizing in the country," says Dean. "As goes Silicon Valley, so goes America."

Working Partnerships USA rates employer practices and publishes a report card on temp agencies. Log on at http://www.atwork.org.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

ASK A WORKING WOMAN



Working women are experts at juggling. **Deadlines at home,** deadlines at work. No time to spare. **Working longer and** harder, but still not making ends meet. In need of equal pay and job opportunities. **Worrying about health** care and education and retirement security. And ready to put their issues on the front burner. That's why the AFL-CIO **Working Women's Department** is launching a massive new outreach program called ASK A WORKING WOMAN.

By Colleen M. O'Neill

THE NATIONAL ASK A WORKING I

ou've heard of the "gender gap" in politics.

Women are more likely than men to vote,
to appreciate the role of government and to cast
their ballots for progressive candidates. But did you
know there's a gender gap when it comes to union
organizing as well?

Women are more likely than men to believe in the power of collective action—and more likely to join unions. Polls consistently show that a majority of women favor joint problemsolving over individual action, and that women are more likely than men to vote for a union. In fact, over the past decade, more women than men have organized into unions. Today, nearly 40 percent of all union members are women—compared with just 18 percent in 1960.

Why do working women feel so strongly about joining forces with others? One reason is that women who are juggling the demands of work, home and family have strikingly similar needs and common concerns. Working women, particularly those with school-age children, have too little time to spare. They're working longer and harder just to make ends meet. They know that more could be done to provide equal pay and opportunities, affordable health care, quality education and retirement security. And they think that if women could participate in more work-place and policy decisions, they could come up with practical ways to solve these problems.

That's why the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department has launched a massive new program to reach out to working women. Through a national survey, a tour of work sites and communities and a nationwide conference for working women, **ASK A WORKING WOMAN** is aiming to put working women's issues on the nation's front burner.

"Millions of women are looking for someone to turn to for help besides their mothers or their friends," says Karen Nussbaum, director of the Working Women's Department. "With our 5.6 million female members, the AFL-CIO is the largest working women's organization in the country. We can be a powerful voice for working women."

By talking to women in every occupation and from every walk of life, **ASK A WORKING WOMAN** is starting a national dialogue about the issues working women care about most. Here's how:

■ A national ASK A WORKING WOMAN survey. Union women from coast to coast will be

distributing a million ASK A
WORKING WOMAN questionnaires (reproduced on pages 13 and
14) to capture women's views on
their work lives and the problems
they face on and off the job. The
results will be used to develop a working women's agenda to present to the
nation's businesses, legislators, policymakers and media.

Meetings with women on a 20-city tour. Led by Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the AFL-ClO's women leaders will visit workplaces, communities, schools and homes to discuss the issues facing working women. During this national tour, they'll also reach out to build partnerships with women's, community, civil rights and religious groups.

■ A national ASK A WORKING WOMAN conference. On September 5-7, a national conference in Washington will bring together thousands of women who are organizing for change. The results of the national survey will be presented at the conference.

The AFL-CIO Working Women's Department also will work with the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, A. Philip Randolph Institute and Labor Council for Latin American Advancement to reach out to diverse communities.

"It's important for all working women—organized or unorganized—to be given the chance to be heard," says Gloria Johnson, who heads the AFL-CIO Executive Council's Working Women Committee and serves as president of CLUW. "Only by having the true picture of women's lives can we develop a response to help them in their struggles."

In a series of focus groups conducted last fall, working women told researchers they are eager for an advocate to address their concerns. They believe that by working in partnership, women, unions, employers and government can develop practical and concrete solutions.

Heading the list is the need for more flexibility on the job. Because more than half of all fam-

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CONFERENCE

September 5-7, 1997

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For more information, call TOLL-FREE:
1-888-971-9797

need two paychecks to keep afloat—and nearly 15 percent are headed by women alone—working women think that employers should be more flexible and accommodating when it comes to the demands on their time.

ilies today

They also think that government could play a greater role in guaranteeing equal pay and opportunities. Women's salaries and benefits are not keeping up with their increasing share of the work force—women earned only 75 percent of men's salaries in 1996. In addition, only about half of all employed women have some kind of pension plan, and access to health insurance remains spotty.

Pay for union women is much higher—and more fair. On average, female union workers earn 38 percent more than their nonunion counterparts. Health insurance, paid leave and sick leave benefits are typically better for union women as well. And union women earn 91 cents to the dollar men earn.

"The common agenda that working women share cuts across occupations, incomes and industries," Nussbaum says. "Women want to take actions to make things better for themselves and their families. We want working women to know we care. We're concerned, we're listening and we're ready to help."

What you can do: Help get the ASK A WORKING WOMAN survey in the hands of working women—union members and unorganized alike. Photocopy the following questionnaire and distribute it in work sites and public places. Or call 1-888-971-9797 for additional copies or information about ASK A WORKING WOMAN.

AN SURVEY

low would you mainly describe yourself?

IE NATIONAL ASK A WORKING WOMAN SURVEY

☐ Retired

woman who usually works for pay Homemaker	☐ Retired ☐	Private business or corpor
d like to know something about your work for pay. If you're please tell us something about your most recent job.	e not working	Government agency Non-profit organization
low would you mainly describe your work for pay?		Self-employed
Supervisor, manager, executive	5.	In general, how do you f
Degreed professional (nurse, teacher, doctor, lawyer, etc.)		Very satisfied
Mid-level manager, professional or paraprofessional		Somewhat satisfied
Administrative, clerical, bookkeeping, data entry		Somewhat dissatisfied
Sales, retail, marketing, food service		Very dissatisfied
Manufacturing, factory work, machine operation		
Technical, computer, laboratory	6.	What's the biggest probl
Building, repair, construction		
Advising, consulting, writing	_	
Police, security, military, uniform service		
Maintenance, janitorial, cleaning	_	
Driving, shipping, transportation, delivery		
Utilities	_	140 -4 4 191-11-11-11
Farming, fishing, forestry, mining		What do you like most a
Artist, performer, handicrafts		The pay
Personal services (hair dresser, home health aide, etc.)	_	The hours Meeting people
Other		Helping people
Where do you do most of your work for pay?		
In an office	L	Donig anniga wen
In a store, restaurant or other public place of business	8.	What do you like least a
In a hospital, nursing home, health care facility		The pay
In a school, college, university, or library		The hours
In a home or other private residence		Stress
In a vehicle (car, truck, airplane,		Boredom
train, boat, etc.)		
In a factory or warehouse	9.	Think about the situation
Outdoors		ve years ago. Please tell
Other	go	otten worse.
	H/	AS IT GOTTEN
. Vol.		ggling work and family
America today		aking ends meet
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chances are 99 out of 100 that s chances are 99 out of your life will spend at least part of the	Sa	aving for retirement
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ca million working complete and the of the	ie Pr	otection from layoffs & dow
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survey. and an ASh heniderator.	De	aid leave to care for a
survey for your reins		sick family member or a new
survey—and an ASK A Nymmassurvey—and an ASK A Nymmassurvey—and an ASK A Nymmassurvey.		safe and healthy workplace
	~	

4. Which best describes Private business or cor Government agency Non-profit organization Self-employed		you work for?	
 5. In general, how do yo Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied 		job?	
6. What's the biggest pr	oblem facing wor	men at work?	
7. What do you like mos			wo)
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☐ Meeting people		earning things	
☐ Helping people		aking a differenc	е
☐ Doing things well	_	othing	
8. What do you like leas	at about your iob?	(check up to t	wo)
☐ The pay		ne benefits	,
☐ The hours	☐ Yo	our co-workers	
☐ Stress	☐ Yo	our boss' attitude	
Boredom	☐ Po	oor opportunities	for promotion
9. Think about the situa	tion for working v	vomen <i>now</i> and	the situation
five years ago. Please t gotten worse.	ell us what has g	otten better and	d what has
HAS IT GOTTEN	Better	Worse	The same
Juggling work and family Making ends meet			
Finding affordable child ca	_		
Saving for retirement			
Health care coverage			
Job security			
Promotions and advancem	ent 🗆		
10. Here are some thing these you have now.	s that many jobs	offer. Please to	ell which of
DO YOU HAVE THIS NOW?	•	Yes	No
Flexible hours/control over		Tes	
Child care	, 5 41 1.0 410		
Elder care			
Pension and retirement be	nefits		
Continuing education and	training		
Secure, affordable health	insurance		
Equal pay for equal work			
Protection from layoffs & o			

a new baby

Spread the word!

Photocopy this two-page questionnnaire and distribute it in workplaces, shopping centers, churches, schools, daycare centers and anyplace where working women gather. The more survey responses we get, the more the voices of working women will be heard.

The national **ASK A WORKING WOMAN survey** is sponsored by the AFL-CIO **Working Women's** Department. If you'd like additional copies of this survey, or for more information on the national **ASK A WORKING WOMAN** conference, call us **TOLL-FREE at** 1-888-971-9797.

THE NATIONAL ASK A WORKING WOMAN SURVEY

HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU?	e of these	Some-	A	Not	20. What is your marital status? Single, divorced, separated, widowed
HOW IMPORTANT TO TOO!	Very	what		at all	Living with someone
Flexible hours/control over your hours					☐ Married
The state of the s		_		_	□ Married
Child care	_				04 140 44 11 5 11 1
Elder care					21. What proportion of your family's income do you personally earn
Pension and retirement benefits					☐ None or almost none ☐ More than half
Continuing education and training					☐ Less than half ☐ All or almost all
Secure, affordable health insurance					☐ About half
Equal pay for equal work					
Protection from layoffs & downsizing					22. Do you have children under the age of 18 living with you?
Punishment for sexual harassment					□ yes □ no
Paid vacation time					IF YES: How old is the youngest?
Paid sick leave for yourself					
Paid leave to care for a					22 What state do you live in?
			LJ		23. What state do you live in?
sick family member or a new baby			_	_	
A safe and healthy workplace					24. Just to make sure we are hearing from many different people,
			,		please indicate the way you would mainly describe yourself.
L2. Think about your immediate super	visor at w	ork. In	general	, how	☐ White ☐ Asian Pacific American
sympathetic and supportive is that pe	rson towa	rds the	needs	of work-	☐ Black/African American ☐ Native American
ng women?					☐ Hispanic/Latina ☐ Other
☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not very	□ Not a	tall [☐ (not ar	pplicable)	
a very			_ (e. ap	, p ,	25. Are you a member of a union? ves no
L3. Now, think about the people at the	ton of th	0.00	2001 01	ordaniza	If yes, which union?
14. What is the best way for women to them in the work place? (check one) Join together and work to solve proble Work separately as individuals to solve 15. Which of the following groups would did to solve address the problems women face in the many as you would like. Government and elected representativ Employers and businesses Community and civic groups	ems as a gr e problems uld you lik the workp	oup e to se	e take a	action to	All survey responses are kept completely confidential. However, if you'd prefer, you may clip and mail this section sepa rately—and we'll add your name to our mailing list for the survey results and our refrigerator magnet.
 □ Organizations of working women □ Labor unions □ Religious organizations 16. If you could ask your boss to chan	_	_	-	•	Street address
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□ \$25,000 to \$39,999

□ \$60,000 to \$74,999

□ \$75,000 or more



For union leaders committed to making their communities a better place to live and work, the AFL-CIO's new "Union Cities" initiative offers a road map. The eight-step organizing and mobilizing course is not an easy one. But in communities from coast to coast. unions will travel the path together.

BY MIKE HALL

Oure, it takes a whole village to raise a child. And it takes a whole Union City to raise the living standards of working families.

What's a Union City, you ask? A Union City is a place where workers earn a living wage and have time to spend with their families. It's where employers respect the contributions of workers and where elected leaders are held accountable to working families. It's where unions are organizing, mobilizing and reaching out to community allies—and building the power to change workers' lives.

"It's a kind of state of mind," says Ron Judd, executive secretary-treasurer of the King County (Wash.) labor council. "And getting there involves a cultural shift in the way labor councils work, their relationships with local unions and the way they

work with the community."



Just launched by the AFL-CIO, "Union Cities" is an initiative designed to encourage and support unions that join forces to make their communities better places to live and work. Recognizing that rebuilding the labor movement will require change and renewed commitment to organizing, the plan calls on central labor councils to unite local unions in their communities around the eight strategies for achieving "Union City" status (see below).

The Union City idea is taking off in every part of the country. More than 40 labor councils nationwide already are considering resolutions to put their local communities on the road to Union City.

"The advantage is clear: Labor can move with one voice down one path," says Evelina Marquez of the Northern New Mexico labor council. And the timing is right, she adds, noting that Santa Fe area unions are enthusiastic about working together following last year's coordinated political action campaigns.

"Union Cities is one of the most exciting things happening in the labor movement," says Amy Dean, the business manager of the South Bay labor council in San Jose, who also serves as chair of the AFL-CIO's CLC Advisory Committee. "It will create the kind of presence labor needs from one end of the country to the other."

"It gives us a clear, easily understood and compelling way to unite the local labor community around our most critical activities—organizing, mobilization, effective political action and coalition building," adds Sheila Mobley, secretary-treasurer of the Atlanta labor council, which will take up a Union City resolution next month.

"Locally, Union Cities can really magnify our relevance in the community," explains Sharon Pardun, political action chair of AFSCME Local 101 in San Jose. "When we need help, we can get a strong show of support and solidarity from other locals turning out at rallies and city council meetings."

The road to Union City is not an easy one:
Local labor communities must pledge to help shift
resources to organizing, recruit members for a
rapid response team to help workers who are trying to organize and build a grassroots political
action network. They must also inspire members
to action through economics education, strive for
diverse leadership on labor council boards and
win political support for the right to organize as
well as community backing for worker-friendly
economic development policies. Finally, they must
accept the challenge to increase their membership.

Union Cities may be difficult, but "if we keep doing what we've been doing, we'll get what we're already getting—declining membership, less bargaining power and loss of clout in the political arena," says Sylvia Woods of OPEIU Local 144 in Knoxville, where the central labor council adopted a Union City resolution in February.

With central labor councils assuming a leadership role, both local and international unions see the advantages of pooling resources in a coordinated, communitywide rebuilding campaign. "It helps create a climate for organizing where different unions can feed off of each other's momentum and success," says Ron Lind, organizing director for UFCW Local 428 in San Jose. "After all, organizing's not as simple as one union saying: 'Let's do it'."

Adds IBEW President John J. Barry: "We can set all the national goals we want, but rebuilding the labor movement is going to happen at the grassroots level. Making the commitment to be part of the Union Cities movement is the best way for local unions to take the lead in that effort."

With central labor
councils assuming a
leadership role, unions
are seeing the advantages
of pooling resources
in a coordinated,
communitywide
rebuilding campaign.

CHANGING TO ORGANIZE

Promote organizing and get half the local unions in your community to sign up for the "Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize" program to shift resources to organizing and develop a long-range organizing plan.

TAKING ON ANTI-UNION EMPLOYERS

Recruit at least one percent of union members in the area for a solidarity and rapid response team. Defend workers who are involved in organizing and first contract campaigns with rallies and economic, legal, and public pressure on employers who violate workers' rights to organize.

BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

Organize grassroots lobbying and political action committees to work on local, state and national issues and build community alliances to support candidates who champion working families. Recruit 100 activists in key legislative districts.

ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR COMMUNITIES

Reach out to community allies to promote worker- and family-friendly economic development strategies.



"With American workers hurting as never before, our unions have to respond as never before—and that's what our new Union Cities program is all about," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Some labor communities have established programs and strategies that give them a head start. In Atlanta, for example, several local unions are already "Changing to Organize"—restructuring to shift resources to organizing—and a rapid response team and 100 political activists are in place. "Central labor councils can match a local union's effort by bringing activists to help with hand-billing, door knocking, house and phone calls," says Stewart Acuff, president of the Atlanta labor council.

And, with more legislative battles shifting from the federal to the state and local levels, "the Union Cities program will enhance the partnership between state feds and CLCs as they confront these challenges," says Danny LeBlanc, Virginia AFL-CIO president.

In Bergen County, New Jersey, the central labor council already has laid the groundwork for developing a pool of rank-and-file activists who will make sure "politicians understand our issues," says Phil McLewin, president of the Bergen County labor council. "Last year, we had affiliated locals each sponsor a night on the phone bank," he says, and the member activists they recruited have created the foundation for a permanent grassroots action network.

In Knoxville, where a dozen organizing drives are under way, a rapid response team will be a major boost in the fight for first contracts, points out Harold Woods, president of the Knoxville/Oak Ridge labor council. "Union Cities sets some ambitious goals, but it can work. It has to work."

"Changing to Organize" can be a tough sell for many local unions, labor council leaders admit. "But I tell them that it's not an overnight transition," says Judd. "And if we don't increase our membership, we're going to be in trouble."

"We've got several unions already changing to organize, and they can show other locals how to do it," says Dean. She adds that labor councils also can help local unions train organizers, identify targets and tap into the resources of the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute.

"We can establish organizer roundtables," adds Jeff Crosby, president of the North Shore (Mass.) labor council. "Even small councils can bring people together to exchange ideas,"

talk strategy and get help."

That's already happening in Baltimore. At a special meeting in January, some 300 local union leaders spent two days studying and discussing Union Cities and fleshing out ideas ranging from a mentoring program for organizers to education packages for members. Two weeks later, the council adopted a Union City resolution. "We wanted to be one of the first on board Union Cities," says Baltimore Labor Council President Ernest Grecco.

ther will a Union City be! But the first step is to pass a resolution in your central labor council Which pledging to pursue the eight Way to strategies for rebuilding the labor movement. The AFL-CIO Field Union Mobilization Department, which City? is urging CLCs to dedicate their April meetings to Union Cities, can help devise an implementation plan. At the end of every year,

At the end of every year, councils working toward Union City status will be evaluated by a special committee. CLCs whose communities achieve Union City designation will be recognized and given extra consideration for federation resources, including AFL-CIO meetings, media, investments and special programs such as Union Summer and America Needs A Raise.

Rome wasn't built in a day. Nei-

If you'd like to help your local labor community get involved in the Union Cities program, call your central labor council.

POCKETBOOK ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Educate and mobilize union members by participating in the AFL-CIO Economics Education program.

Persuade a local government to pass a resolution supporting the right of workers to organize. Make recognition of the right to organize a con-

dition of union support for political

candidates.

MIRROR THE MEMBERSHIP

Work to ensure that leaders and officials of AFL-CIO central labor bodies are as diverse as the membership of affiliated unions.

Reach an annual membership growth rate of 3 percent by the year 2000. Make organizing a top priority and join forces with other unions in coordinated organizing campaigns.

NEW ORGAN

The latest in organizing campaigns, strategies and programs went on display in Los Angeles during the winter meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

hese are modern-day plantations," Food and Commercial Workers President Doug Dority told reporters at a news briefing in Los Angeles last month. "We saw labor camps where workers suffer debilitating

back injuries after stooping and bending for 10 to 12 hours a day, and where three and four families live in cramped, dilapidated two-bedroom houses."

Eyewitnesses: An AFL-CIO Executive Council delegation tours California's strawberry fields

DAVID BACON/IMPACT VISUALS

Having just returned from the heart of California's strawberry country, where he and a delegation of AFL-CIO Executive Council members saw firsthand the dismal living and working conditions of strawberry pickers, Dority vowed to urge supermarket owners across the country to support their struggle. The eyewitness accounts of the delegation—which included AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez, Laborers President Arthur A. Coia, Machinists President George Kourpias and UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown—were part of a presentation to the AFL-CIO Executive Council on the joint campaign by the UFW and the AFL-CIO to improve the lives of 20,000 strawberry workers.

THE HEART OF STRAWBERRY COUNTRY

E ven as the California strawberry industry takes in annual sales of \$650 million, strawberry pickers are struggling for a living wage, health insurance, job security, clean drinking water and bathrooms in the fields.

"After workers voted for the UFW, the industry plowed under crops, fired workers and shut down operations rather than negotiate a union contract," Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez told the delegation of AFL-CIO Executive Council members touring the fields last month. "Clearly, only public support will persuade the industry to bargain in good faith."

As part of an innovative, nationwide campaign, the UFW and the AFL-CIO are asking union members, consumers, community leaders and supermarket owners around the country to sign pledges of support for the strawberry pickers. Most recently, the executives of Ralph's, California's largest supermarket chain, signed the pledge.

On April 13, thousands of supporters will march in Watsonville, Calif. For information, call the Farm Workers at 408-763-4820 or the AFL-CIO at 1-888-AFL-CIOO (202-637-5280 in Washington).

ZING FIELDS

NEW HEIGHTS IN LAS VEGAS

e've never done anything like this before," AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert Georgine told the Executive Council, referring to the newly-launched multicraft Building Trades Organizing Project (BTOP).

Operating under one director, one campaign budget and one set of goals and principles, the Building and Construction Trades Department, its 15 affiliated unions, the AFL-CIO and the Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council intend to organize an entire sector of the construction industry in Las Vegas. The pilot project is part of a strategic plan to reverse the decline of union density in the construction industries, and will rely on worker-to-worker organizing strategies.

"It's a lot like the way our founders organized our trade unions. They went worker to worker, carpenter to carpenter, painter to painter, ironworker to ironworker," said Georgine. "The difference is that back then, each craft operated independently. This campaign will be interdependent and coordinated."

The strawberry workers' campaign was one of many new organizing initiatives in the spotlight during the winter meeting of the Executive Council in Los Angeles.

"We're focusing on one central topic, and that's how to organize bigger and better and turn the labor movement around," said Coia, who chairs the AFL-CIO Organizing Committee. "We're looking at new and innovative approaches to organizing. Industrywide campaigns like the recent victory by asbestos workers in New York and similar campaigns now being conducted in California are examples that have proven successful."

During the weeklong gathering in February, council members heard from Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, on a multicraft, multimillion-dollar drive to organize construction workers in fast-growing Las Vegas. They

joined nearly 3,000 union members in the streets to protest violations of workers' rights at the New Otani hotel, where HERE is helping low-wage immigrant workers organize. They unveiled a new commitment to demand organizing rights for an estimated 2 million "workfare" participants—welfare recipients who are heading into the work force.

And they launched the AFL-CIO's sixpronged organizing program, which is designed to set the stage for new organizing on a massive scale. The program includes:

- Changing to Organize. Through elected leader retreats, upcoming regional conferences (see back page) and materials such as the "Changing to Organize" manual and videotape, the AFL-CIO Organizing Department is helping unions make the changes needed to shift resources to organizing.
- Organizing Institute. The AFL-CIO Organizing Institute is multiplying its efforts to recruit, train and place new organizers throughout the country, and AFL-CIO constituency groups are recruiting Asian-American, Latino and African-American organizers.
- Strategic organizing. The AFL-CIO Corporate Affairs Department is helping develop strategic research to support industrywide and geographic campaigns such as the strawberry workers' and building trades' organizing campaigns.
- Ask A Working Woman. The AFL-CIO Working Women's Department is reaching out to working women with a massive survey, 20-city tour and national conference (pps. 11–14).
- Union Summer. The Union Summer internship program will continue to expose workers and students to the world of organizing. In addition, the AFL-CIO will provide an opportunity for retirees to support organizing through a Senior Summer program, and a new year-round program is being developed to attract young people to the movement.
- Right to Organize. The AFL-CIO will turn up the heat on employers who violate workers' rights to organize and develop tactics to help workers win union recognition through card-check procedures, workers' rights boards and

other community-based strategies.

"We will demonstrate the profound inadequacy of today's labor laws and build community and labor support to counter the illegal actions of employers," said AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger.

JIM RYMER/IMPACT VISUALS



On the march: Protesting at the New Otani

LOS ANGELES TO THE WORLD

ith a spirited rush-hour march to the New Otani hotel in Los Angeles, nearly 3,000 protesters drew national attention to the hotel's intimidation, harassment and illegal firings of low-wage immigrant workers trying to organize with help from HERE Local 11. One day earlier, labor and human rights activists in Japan held demonstrations outside the Tokyo headquarters of the New Otani hotel and and its controlling owner, the Kajima Corp.

The New Otani campaign is a prime example of the labor movement's new and creative approaches to organizing, which include building international solidarity against multinational employers and establishing innovative community-labor coalitions. The Executive Council passed a resolution endorsing HERE's boycott of the hotel and calling for support from trade unions around the world. And during the march, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney announced plans to travel to Japan next month and attempt to meet with the executives of both companies.

STOPS IN SAN DIEGO

s part of a broad effort to protest Gov. Pete Wilson's plan to privatize state services, the California

INIVIDUITALE

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SACRAMENTO TO SAN DIEGO

SPONNORD DO SEN. NEIL LOCAL 1996

Employees' Association is coming up with visual ways to draw attention to the misuse of taxpayers' dollars. Last year, members of the SEIU local collected thousands of signatures on "DMV Dollars" to remind the governor that public dollars go farther when state workers are

on the job.

The signatures were collected by CSEAs DMV Dollar Relay Caravan, an assembly of vans, buses and cars that made a two-day trek from Sacramento to San Diego. The caravan stopped at DMV offices and other pickup points in Sacramento, the Bay Area, Bakersfield and Southern California. Union Summer activists were among the spirited caravan riders.

THE BUCK A SIGN OF PRIDE

he's five-feet-three, 105 pounds—a teacher's aide in a kindergarten—and she's "Big Labor." He has a mop of curly red hair and operates a cash register at the burger joint. He's "Big Labor," too.
They're ordinary working people, but thanks to a group of unionists, scholars and friends of labor that came together through the Internet, they are helping to break the stereotype of labor as a monolithic, threatening force.

The group is sponsoring production of a button stating—you guessed it—"I Am Big Labor," with proceeds going to the Detroit newspaper strikers.

They hope their gesture will help tell the world that big labor actually is "everyone who belongs to a union, or would like to."

You can get your very own "I Am Big Labor" button for \$1 plus postage by contacting Bryan Thompson in care of the NATCA Voice, 112 Juliann Drive No. 5, Wood Dale, Ill. 60191.

BUST THOSE BUSTERS

wenty-five big business flunkies at a "How to Remain Union Free" seminar at Cincinnati's Hyatt Hotel found it ain't going to be so easy. Some 250 rank-and-file union members holding an organizing seminar upstairs decided the union busters-in-training ought to see organizers face to face.

Chanting "hey, ho, union busters got to go," the group so discombobulated the fledgling anti-unionites that most fled the seminar.





The trainees work for some of the biggest employers in the tristate region of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. They "like to pretend they take the high road in the community toward promoting labor peace," said V. Daniel Radford, executive-secretary of the Cincinnati Labor Council. "Then they

hold these seminars that are strictly meant to bust labor unions."



Instead of waiting on the National Labor Relations Board process to organize at Visiting Nurses & Hospice in San Francisco, workers are using political and community pressure to persuade management to recognize Service Employees Locals 250 and 790.



Demonding recognition: Homecore workers

Last November, organizers held a mail-ballot "community election" supervised by two area leaders, the Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church and Superior Court Judge John Dearman.

Though nearly 65 percent of VN&H's 500 workers voted for the union, management has so far refused to recognize the union, citing the NLRB as "the only way."

Workers are winning support from the mayor and several San Francisco supervisors, who endorsed resolutions that require city contractors to remain neutral in organizing campaigns and to recognize unions when a majority of workers sign cards. VN&H receives roughly \$5 million of city money each year.



SUPPORT TO SWEAR BY

eligious leaders in Syracuse, N.Y., are standing firm in their support of workers organizing at Landis Plastics—even after being told, in very unholy terms, to "get the #&!%\$ out" of the plant.

Rabbi Daniel Jezer, Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Costello and United Church of Christ Rev. Dale Hindmarsh were thrown out after they protested the company's poor safety and working conditions.

Get out they did-but out to the front of the plant, where they and other members of the Labor/Religion Coalition now are holding weekly prayer vigils on behalf of the workers who are trying to join the Steelworkers. The sermons, rallies and other coalition activities have been "a tremendous boost for organized labor" in Syracuse, says USWA International Rep. Jim Valenti.

"Our goal is to get information to the people in the pulpits and to the Sunday school teachers," says coalition coordinator Ed Griffin-Nolan.

LI-HUA LAN/SYRACUSE NEWSPAPERS

Divine intervention: Fighting

Call the Health Care

We've all heard horror stories of a health-care system where cost-cutting and profit-gouging have run amok-stories about drive-through labor and delivery, same-day mastectomies, and "gag orders" restricting how caregivers can tell patients about treatment options.

New Jersey's "Patients First Coalition" is doing something about it. Composed of members of the AFT, Operating Engineers, District 1199J/AFSCME and an independent union, the coalition is lobbying for improved staffing in nursing

homes, whistle-blower protection for health care workers, a return to yearly inspections by the Department of Health—and more DOH inspectors.

Courtesy of the coalition, nearly 50,000 Garden State residents have received a consumer guide to health care in the '90s, while a three week state wide radio blitz spotlighted the indus try's alarming pen chant for pro

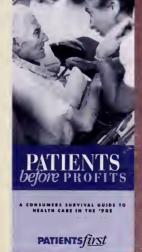
quality care. A tollline-888/PT HELP 9 giving consumers and health-care workers a tell their stories. @

MUSICIANS IN CONCERT

hen you represent traveling folk musicians, you have to be innovative to get your organizing message out. Musicians Local 1000, which represents traveling acoustic players, took its message in a big way to the North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance's convention in Toronto.

Thanks to Local 1000, while performers, agents, promoters and managers talked business, they also talked union. The local conducted workshops on pensions and organizing, held a general membership meeting and hosted a reception for agents and managers to educate them about the union.

And, of course, they sang. First was a "Dream Concert" of folk music legends, followed by a Pete Seeger singalong, a women's song swap, a banjo and guitar jam and a freedom song-sing.



Shoptalk

Just The Facts On Family and Medical Leave



he Family and Medical Leave Act enacted four years ago is one of the most important—and one of the least publicized—labor laws ever passed by Congress.

Chances are, the workers you represent may not know what their rights are under the act. Here are answers to the basic questions many workers have:

- What's covered? Eligible employees can get up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child; care of a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition; or for a serious health condition that prevents an employee from working. The leave can be taken all at once or in smaller increments. When employees return from leave, their employers must restore them to their former position or an equivalent one.
- Who's covered? Private-sector businesses with at least 50 full- and part-time employees within 75 miles of the work site, as well as all public-sector employers. Employees must have worked for their employer for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours within those 12 months prior to taking leave.
- What's a "serious health condition"? An illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either in-patient hospital care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. It includes pregnancy, chronic conditions like migraine headaches or diabetes, serious injuries and other serious conditions that make it impossible for employees to perform the essential functions of their jobs. It does not include minor illnesses like a cold or routine visits to the doctor.
- What paperwork is required? The employer may require medical certification, as well as additional medical opinions at the employer's expense. Employees have a minimum of 15 calendar days to submit certification.
- What do workers have to do? Notify the employer of the need to take leave for a serious health condition 30 days prior when the need is foreseeable; otherwise, as soon as practicable. The employer must then tell the worker whether the leave will be counted as FMLA leave, as well as the requirements for maintaining benefits and rights upon returning, which

include resumption of the same or an equivalent job.

- So what about benefits? Employers are required to continue group health benefits during the FMLA leave.
- Can a worker be disciplined for using FMLA leave? No. Workers cannot be penalized under workplace attendance policies, nor suffer retaliation or discrimination.
- What happens when family leave provisions in a collective bargaining agreement are different? If a union contract or other federal or state laws provide for greater benefits, that's what workers get.

Even in cases where union contracts provide for greater benefits than the federal law, the FMLA is a valuable supplement to a collective bargaining agreement. Union stewards can use the FMLA in grievances concerning discipline, job evaluations, promotions and other matters which rely on attendance records.

If you'd like to know more, a good source of information is *The FMLA Handbook* by Boston labor lawyer Robert M. Schwartz. This new guide for union members, stewards and staff offers an easy-to-use explanation of the complicated regulations issued by the Department of Labor as well as examples of how to use the FMLA to build the union. The cost is \$9.95 per copy plus shipping, with discounts for bulk orders. For information, call Work Rights Press at 1-800-576-4552.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Q. Are there any rules to prevent employers from using the Immigration and Naturalization Service to thwart organizing drives?

A. The INS recently revised its policies regarding immigration inspections at work sites involved in labor disputes. Effective last December, tips regarding undocumented workers must be

considered in the light of whether they were provided to interfere with the rights of employees to form, join or assist labor organizations; be paid minimum wages and overtime; have safe workplaces; receive compensation for work-related injuries; be free from discrimination based on race, gender, age, national origin, religion or handicap; or to retaliate against workers seeking to exercise these rights.

The INS maintains that by itself, a labor dispute is not a barrier to enforcing America's immigration laws. However, when information is provided in order to interfere with employees' rights, agents must seek higher approval before taking action. If

workers are arrested or detained despite these precautions, they may not be removed from the country without notification of the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

If you are involved in an organizing drive where the INS conducts an inspection, the AFL-CIO Organizing Department would like to know. Call them at 202-639-6200.

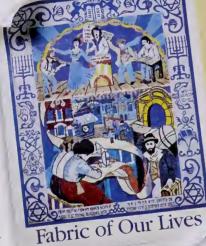
Q. One of our members is trying to find union insignias, including some old ones belonging to unions no longer in existence. Do you have a source we could pass on to him?

A. While there is no single reference book that comprehensively illustrates all insignias of record, a good place to start would be proceedings from past federation conventions going back to the turn of the century. You

might also check with the staff of the George Meany Center Archives, who have wide knowledge of where records of various unions are located. They can be reached at 301-431-5451.

PUBLICATIONS

- Current Statistics on White-Collar Employees is a new report published by the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees that provides general statistics, employment, earnings and union data on white-collar workers. Contact DPE at 202-638-0320.
- The Impact of Violence in the Lives of Working Women: Creating Solutions—Creating Change, a publication by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, provides background information on violence against women in the workplace. It is available for \$5 from NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 99 Hudson Street, New York, N.Y. 10013; 212-925-6635.
- The Jewish Labor Committee celebrated the rededication of Chicago's mosaic mural "Fabric of Our Lives" with a commemorative poster. The mural was created in 1980 on the wall of the Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center by Chicago Public



Arts Group artists and 100 community volunteers. Signed posters are available for \$50 and unsigned posters for \$20 from the JLC, 25 East 21st St., 2nd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10010; phone 212-477-0707.

CONTEST

• The International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) is sponsoring its 1997 Journalism Awards Contest and Film and Broadcast Competition. The journalism awards recognize outstanding efforts to portray labor issues and involvement in the 1996 elections; the deadline for entries is April 4. Broadcast awards recognize labor video and audio communications; the deadline for entries is April 25. Contact the ILCA at 202-637-5068.

STOP THE PAIN

starting this Workers Memorial Day

or the 700,000 workers who each year suffer from repetitive stress and back injuries caused by ergonomic hazards on the job, the labor movement will mobilize around a new drive to *Stop The Pain!*

Beginning this Workers Memorial Day, April 28, the AFL-CIO is making available a *Stop The Pain!* workplace ergonomic action kit, poster, fact sheets, petitions, stickers, flier and other materials as well as letters and talking points. The materials will be used in the fight for:

- Employers' commitment to fight repetitive stress injuries.
- An OSHA standard mandating ergonomics programs.
- Just compensation for injured workers.

Despite progress made in occupational safety in the more than 25 years since OSHA was passed, more than 7 million workers suffer job-related injuries each year—and 55,000 die from job-related hazards. And the scourge of cumulative trauma disorders is a growing danger that affects virtually every industry and occupation and causes physical and financial struggles for the rest of workers' lives.

Each year on Workers Memorial Day, thousands of workers in hundreds of plants, local unions, central labor bodies and state federations pay tribute to those who have died or are injured because of job hazards, with observances ranging from candlelight vigils and bell-ringings to monument unveilings and marches.

For more information, contact the AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health, 815 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone 202-637-5366; fax 202-508-6978; or e-mail 71363.1544@compuserve.com.

VIDEO

- "The Killing Floor," a film about the historic but little-known fight to build an interracial union in the Chicago stockyards in 1919, has been re-released in VHS and 16mm formats and is available for rent from Made in USA Productions, 220 East 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010; phone 212-679-5008. Proceeds will go to other labor film projects.
- Out At Work is a 55-minute film documenting the continuing struggles of three lesbian and gay workers who provide insight into the impact discrimination has had on them and their families. Contact Andersongold Films, 151 First Avenue, Suite 210, New York, N.Y. 10003; 212-982-7222.
- Power Switch, a new video produced by the Electrical Workers, features workers from around the country who contrast the promised

benefits of utility industry deregulation with the reality. For more information, call IBEWs Media Relations Department at 202-728-6135.

• "Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, And Riffraff" is an illustrated guide to 150 films about working people and labor activism by Tom Zaniello, an English professor at Northern Kentucky University. It's available for \$18.95 from Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 E. State St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14851-0250; phone 607-277-2338.

BROADCAST

• The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers' Struggle, a two-hour documentary on the history of the Farm Workers and a profile of Chavez, will premier on PBS stations April 16 at 9 p.m. (check local listings.) A companion book to the series published by Harcourt Brace also is available.

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GET ENERGIZED.

Building the kind of labor movement that can change workers' lives will take new thinking, new strategies and new energy. That's why we're putting our heads together in a series of regional AFL-CIO conferences on *Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize*. Here's a forum where you can gain strategic insights from keynotes, practical know-how from workshops and inspiration from cultural presentations, videos and actions. So get ready, get energized and get to the regional conference nearest you!

SHARE IDEAS.

It doesn't matter
whether you're a union
leader, representative,
steward, member,
worker or community
activist. If you're trying
to organize, the regional
organizing conferences
are a place where you
can swap information,
ideas and experiences
with others who share
your commitment.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES COMING YOUR WAY

Mark your calendars now!

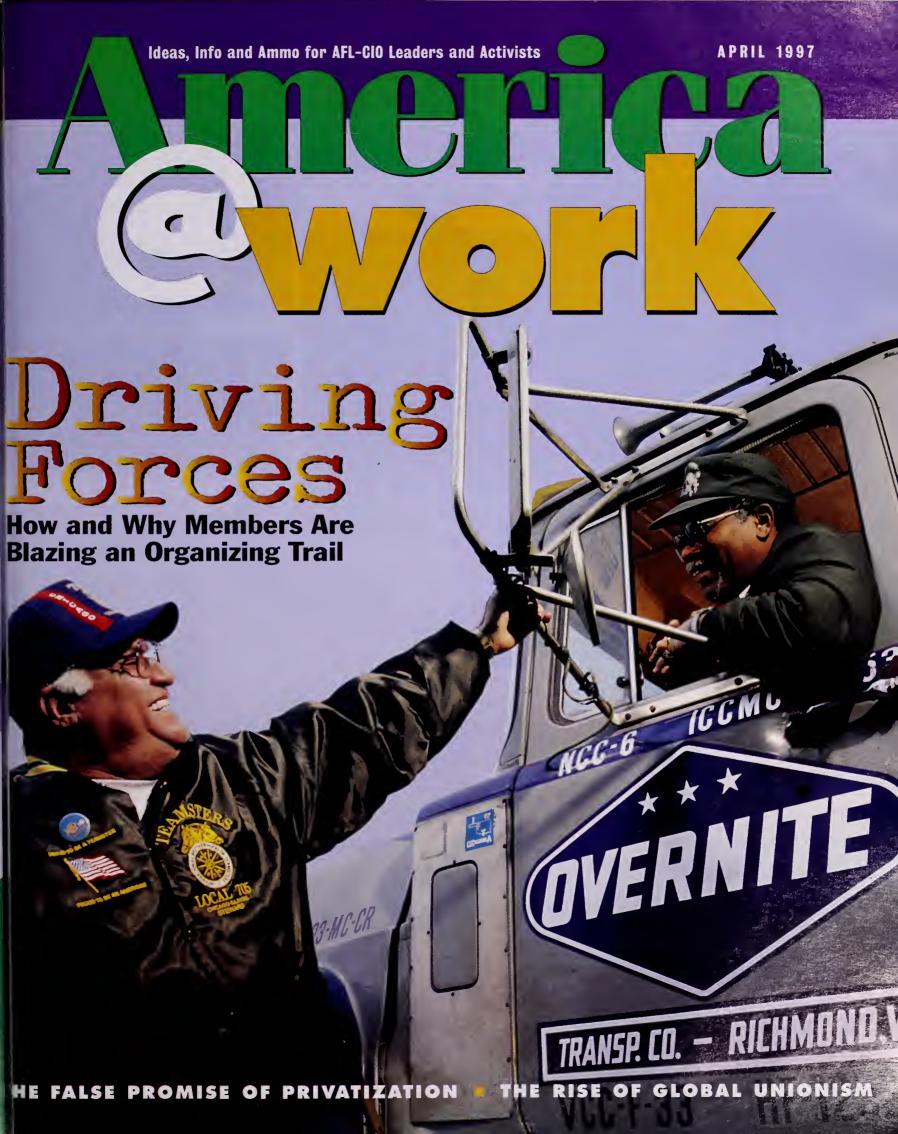
Seattle - March 26
Miami - April 19
New York - April 29
Los Angeles - May 14
Atlanta - June 7
Philadelphia - June 10
Cleveland - June 19
Boston - June 23
Minneapolis - July 17
Chicago - August 7
Austin - August 8
Denver - August 14

FIND OUT WHAT WORKS.

How do we get more resources for organizing?
Where do we find new organizing talent? How can we mobilize members and community support? These regional conferences will cover everything from the basics of house calls to cutting-edge tactics to strategic planning.

For more information, contact your AFL-CIO regional office.

East: 212-661-1555 Midwest: 847-255-4747 South: 404-766-5050 West: 415-398-7152



Ideas and Views From You

THE TEMPORARY SITUATION

(a) In your article "Where Have All The Real Jobs Gone?" (March issue), the unions' tactics you describe in organizing temporary and contingent workers are most appropriate. Workers need a union regardless of their status. We all have the same responsibilities in life—a mortgage, child care, car notes, groceries, utilities and our children's education.—Julius Cephas, Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Local 1694-1, Wilmington, DE

(a) We thought your readers would like to know that here in Boston, we've just launched a center for workers in contingent and part-time jobs, backed by a 40-organization coalition of local unions and community groups. Though we're just getting off the ground, the Temp Employees Meeting Place (TEMP) is developing a multi-pronged fighting strategy ranging from helping unions identify and organize large groups of temps, to pushing for legislation for equal pay and benefits, to establishing a "code of conduct" for temp employers to follow, to creating worker-run temp cooperatives and hiring halls-whatever is necessary to better our working conditions, pay and benefits. For a copy of our free newsletter, call us at 617-236-0044 or e-mail at akaironin@aol.com. We'd love to hear from you!—Jason Pramas, Temp Employees Meeting Place, Boston

@ Where have all the real jobs gone? They've gone down the rathole dug by America's corporate barons who see well-paid workers only as obstacles to bigger bonuses or stock options. Unless these modernday robber barons suddenly become enlightened about human dignity and workers' rights, the only thing that will get their attention is

the proverbial 2x4 upside their collective intellects by America's unions.—Fran Marceau, UTU Local 891, Whitefish, Mont.

WOMEN AT WORK

Although I am not a union member, I applaud the AFL-CIO's efforts to launch a new program to give working women a voice. As your article ("Ask A Working Woman," March issue) so eloquently details, working women desperately need a voice in all workplaces-union and nonunion. While we have made some progress in the last 30 years, there is much to do as we enter the 21st century. —Deidra Walker, Denver

ON THE ROAD

(a) When I first started reading "The Road to Union City" (March issue), I thought: This is all pie in the sky and it'll never happen. This program is destined to fail-it's just too much. Then, as I continued to read it, I changed my mind. It's about time we all got off our collective butts and did something to save this labor movement and to save ourselves! Make no mistake, it will take hard work. But if we all work at it, it will work.—Carole Casamento, OPEIU Local 9, Milwaukee

@ Why not have a 100 percent union-OWNED city rather than just influencing existing cities through

When you see unions@work and our members@work

and collective power in our

communities@work.

that's when you see



What's your point of view? Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@Work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908.

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com. Internet: http://www.aflcio.org.

> union politics? Could be quite a challenge to labor economists, don you think, to come up with a way t maximize employment and standard of living through workers' economic self-sufficiency? The theory I offer is just a matter of extending the worker-owned business as far as it will go-a worker-owned conglomerate that produces all the amenities of modern life. I propose the Bamberton Model City here in B.C., but bigger and better-for 100,000-plus people instead of 12,000. Let's pull out all the stops and see the best Union City that labor can come up with.—Franklin Wayne Poley, Labour Welfare Party, British Columbia



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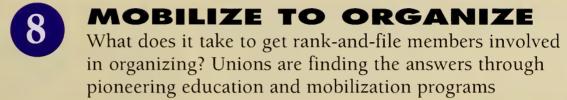
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NO Replacement Parts for Ford

t took a strike, solidarity from auto workers at other plants and a rare move by the Ford Motor Co., but newly-organized workers at two auto supply plants have won a first contract. The 500 workers who manufacture car seats at Johnson Controls plants in Michigan and Ohio had won UAW recognition through a card check last year, but their fight for a union agreement took them out on strike in late January.

Out on the picket lines, nearly 2,000 Ford workers turned out in

the freezing cold to show support for the Michigan strikers.

Johnson Controls continued to operate the plant. But when offered seats made by replacement workers for its hot-selling Expedition sportutility vehicles, Ford refused.

One month later, Johnson Controls settled a new three-year agreement with the workers.

"We salute Ford Motor Co. for their sensitivity to the concerns of all of the UAW-represented workers throughout the situation," says UAW President Stephen Yokich.

The new contract, which covers more

than 500 UAW members at plants in Plymouth, Mich., and Oberlin, Ohio, calls for defined-benefit pensions, comprehensive health care and wage increases ranging from 22 percent to 50 percent over the next two years.

"This victory lets 300,000 unorganized workers in the auto supply industry know they have the backing of the labor movement and that they, too, can make the gains that Johnson workers made," says Bob King, UAW Region 1A director.

Warming Up to Organizing

new poll released in February shows attitudes about organizing are on the upswing.

Fully 44 percent of workers today say they would support forming a union in their workplace, compared with 39 percent last year and 30 percent in 1984, according to the poll by Peter

Hart Research. Support for unions is even stronger among African-Americans, Latinos, women and younger workers.

The poll also found concerns about corporate irresponsibility continue to grow. Fully 70 percent of the public feel that corporations have too much power in today's economy.

LOOKING SHARP

fter an intense community pressure campaign by AFSCME, Sharp Health-Care dropped its challenges to a union election win last June and agreed to negotiate with 2,600 registered nurses in six San Diego hospitals.

"Sharp has committed to a partnership with both the nurses and the community, and we are looking forward to sitting down and addressing our mutual concerns and goals, which are to provide the highest quality health care for our patients," says Judi King, co-chair of the Sharp Professional Nurses Network (SPNN).

The board also dropped its efforts to turn control of Sharp hospitals over to Columbia/ HCA, the nation's largest forprofit health-care company.

The announcement came shortly after Vice President Gore met with a Sharp nurse and five other workers during the February AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting.



COUNTDOWN TO FIRST CONTRACT

ith more than 25,000 Maryland state employees in four units now represented by AFSCME, and another 7,800 represented by a coalition of the Teamsters and AFSCME, "state employees go to the bargaining table this spring speaking with one powerful voice," says AFSCME Maryland Campaign Director Kim Keller.

For 7,000 clerical workers, who in March became the fifth unit of state workers to organize, negotiations can't begin soon enough. Lack of respect is their number one issue, says Cindi Foard, a clerk at the Department of Housing and Community Development in Crownsville. "This will give us equality with supervisors and some of our dignity back," she says.

Maryland state employees were extended collective bargaining rights last May with an executive order by the governor. AFSCME, IBT and AFT are conducting organizing drives in the state.

Powerful voice in Maryland: AFSCME President Gerald McEntee leads the charge



JOHN COLLIER

NAFTA'S TICKING TIME BOMBS

p against intense lobbying pressure from the trucking industry, the Teamsters are warning policymakers about the safety hazards posed by NAFTA provisions that will allow freight vehicles from Mexico highway access throughout the nation.

The union recently conducted an inspection in Laredo, Texas, where as many as 4,500 trucks cross the border every day, and found virtually no safety inspections and only cursory customs inspections. "There is no enforcement at the border," IBT President Ron Carey told the House International Economic Policy and Trade Subcommittee. "These trucks from Mexico are a ticking time bomb on our highways. They are a ready-made pipeline to bring more drugs into our schools and our neighborhoods."

The Clinton administration so far has delayed implementation of the NAFTA trucking provisions. At present, Mexican trucks are limited to a 20-mile zone along the border, where their cargoes are transferred to U.S. carriers.

Meanwhile, the entire labor movement is lining up to insist that worker rights be incorporated into any new trade agreements. Proposals for NAFTA expansion are expected to come before Congress this month.

W R E C K Right to Work

raving blustery cold Montana winter weather, and with only two days' notice, hundreds of Montana union members filed into the state capitol in February to kill right-to-work legislation.

Chanting in solidarity against "right to wreck," the workers staged a

rally before heading for the statehouse halls and committee rooms to lobby and testify against the bill. In the end, Republicans in both chambers failed to find support to take the legislation to the floor. "This was a tremendous victory for the labor movement in a state where only 16 of the current Senate members carry our endorsement," says Montana AFL-CIO Executive Secretary Don Judge.

Montana: Members kill a bill

Montana union members now are bracing for the next wave—a proposal to call for a public referendum on the issue.

On the other side of the country, union members in New Hampshire also defeated a right-to-work bill in the state legislature. Rep. Ed Mears, a Paperworker and New Hampshire AFL-CIO Executive Board member, led the floor fight.

NEW DIRECTIONS

ore than 5,000 flight attendants at TWA, who were represented by an unaffiliated union, have voted for the strength in numbers supplied by the Machinists.

The victory means IAM now represents 80 percent of the carrier's unionized work force, or 21,000 workers. Union Transportation Vice President Bill Scheri says the vote "sends a strong message to TWA management that TWA employees, who have sacrificed so much, will no longer tolerate business as usual."

AT TWA

Strengthened by the election result, the union will press for a new direction for the financially troubled carrier. IAM has denounced TWA management for shrinking its hub at New York's Kennedy Airport and cutting overseas flights.

SPOTLIGHT

Cultivating a GRASSROOTS Network

hether it's to march for striking Detroit newspaper workers or lend a helping hand to recent flood victims, the Cincinnati Labor Council knows how to turn out

The key, says Dan Radford, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati CLC, is a nearly 3,000-name database of union members who have volunteered for phone

banks, attended labor education seminars, held local office—or participated in just about any activity in the past two years.

That database grew out of the CLC's traditionally strong political operations. "We spend



On call: Cincinnati activists

a lot of time updating it, and within it we have groups of folks we know will write letters, others who like to go out and raise a little hell and those who help out in politics," says Radford.

The CLC cultivates those folks. Through letters, a lot of "mingling" at functions and phone calls just to say "hi," the activist core is kept involved. "You can't just call them when you need them," Radford says. "It's a 12-month operation."

Most recently, the CLC was able to supplement its other community service efforts by turning out hundreds of union volunteers to help the Ohio River Valley victims of March's disastrous floods.

Building a grassroots activist base is a key goal in the new Union Cities program, which encourages unions to join forces through their CLCs to build a stronger labor movement in their communities. The Cincinnati Labor Council and its 200 locals and 80,000 union members adopted a Union Cities resolution in February.

-Mike Hall

OUT FRONT

Currents

Changing to Organize, Exchanging Ideas

or a day of new thinking, new strategies and new energy, more than 750 activists took part in the first of the AFL-CIO's regional conferences on "Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize" held March 26 in Seattle.

Union leaders, reps, stewards, members, supporters and activists came together to exchange ideas on reaching out to unorganized workers, working with community allies and mobilizing against employer abuses. "Just as corporate America is changing in this new economy, we must also change—by building a new movement to fight for workers' right to organize," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the gathering.

Plan now to attend the regional conference nearest you: Miami, April 19; New York City, April 29; Los Angeles, May 14; Atlanta, June 7; Philadelphia, June 10; Cleveland, June 19; Boston, June 23; Minneapolis, July 17; Chicago, August 7; Austin, August 8; Denver, August 14; and Detroit (to be announced). For more information, call 202-637-5066.



CHAOS REVISITED?

MERGER STEP

he UAW, Machinists and Steelworkers took another big step toward their mega-merger with the recent naming of a 54-member rank-and-file advisory committee.

"These are the hands-on members who bring the workers' perspective to these proceedings," explains IAM President George Kourpias. The group will work with the presidents of the three international unions and assist the unification and constitutional committees.

All three unions have endorsed the unification, which is scheduled for the year 2000 and would create the largest industrial union in the country and the secondlargest in the world. The new union would have more than 2 million members and a strike fund of more than \$1 billion.

nited Airlines' Flight
Attendants have begun
informational picketing as
a warning to management that
their famous CHAOS (Creating
Havoc Around Our System) strategy is on its way back.

"If we exhaust the negotiations and mediation process and United still has not agreed to a new contract, then CHAOS will escalate into a series of unpredictable work actions," warns Kevin Lum, president of AFA's United Master Executive Council.

The picketing comes after the Air Line Pilots and the Machinists reached tentative agreements with United that bring wages back to levels existing before July 1994, when workers traded concessions for an ownership stake in the carrier. The agreements would raise wages for 8,500 pilots and 25,000 mechanics, ramp workers and other IAM members by 10 percent over the next two years.

here's a dirty little secret in the U.S. tax code, and it's one that's been surrounded by a conspiracy of silence for many years.

I'm referring to the perverse tax loopholes that actually favor companies that move their jobs and capital to foreign countries. Every year, thousands of corporations claim foreign tax credits and deferrals as a reward for abandoning America's working families. These tax breaks not only swell the coffers of multinational corporations at the expense of U.S. jobs, but they also deplete our country of desperately-needed revenues for vital public programs.

One of the most pressing needs is to improve our nation's education and training programs. Fully one third of all elementary and secondary schools in the United States—serving 14 million students—are in need of extensive repair or renovation. It will take

Calling the Question on America's Priorities

by John J. Sweeney



billions and billions of dollars not only to repair our schools but to update them as well, so that children can attain the computer literacy they'll need to compete in today's job market and to perform in tomorrow's workplaces. One of the smartest ways I can think of to find at least some of that needed money would be to eliminate the tax breaks that actually encourage companies to move production and services overseas.

The vast majority of voters agree. Roughly 81 percent of the public thinks the government should help communities upgrade school facilities so they are safe and up to date, and 71 percent believe we should eliminate tax breaks for companies that move U.S. jobs overseas.

It's time to call the question on America's priorities.

Will we put education ahead of corporate welfare, our children's needs ahead of corporate special interests? That's the choice we're asking members of the U.S. Congress to make. And to encourage them to make the right decision, we're running television commercials in selected areas of the country urging families to write or call their representatives in Congress.

"Let's make the right choice for working families." This refrain from our television ads is the message we'll be delivering throughout our 1997 grassroots education and mobilization campaign—not only in our fight to end corporate welfare, but also in our continuing struggle to protect Social Security, to stop antiworking family comp time and TEAM Act legislation, to secure health care for children and to include worker rights in trade agreements.

Let me urge you to call 1-800-LABOR-21 (522-6721) and talk to your representative in Congress. Every union activist needs to get involved in the fight to convince Congress to live up to their responsibilities to our children and to support our "Working Families Agenda" for education, health care and retirement security for all.

ADay to REMERS

bell rings. A candle is lit and then extinguished. A black arm band is pulled up above the elbow. A monument is unveiled. On April 28, Workers Memorial Day, workers across the country will stop to remember those who lost their lives on the job—and renew their commitment to prevent deaths, illnesses and injuries caused by workplace hazards. This year, they'll make a special push to "Stop The Pain!" of repetitive stress, crippling back and other ergonomic injuries.

Here's a sampling of the events local unions, labor councils and union and job safety activists are planning to mark the day:

- In northern California, where activists are tracking the progress of a state standard on ergonomics (the first attempt by the state's Standards Board has been sent back to the drawing board), unions are planning to hold media events and link workers with repetitive stress injuries with local reporters to get the real story out.
- Activists in Contra Costa County, Calif., will rally outside the Shell Oil refinery on April 27 during the 2 p.m. shift change. Several serious safety abuses have occurred at county refineries and chemical plants in the area over the last several years.
- In York County, Pa. (home of Rep. William F. Goodling, chair of the House committee with jurisdiction over job safety issues), an observance is planned to honor six local workers killed on the job last year. "We've got a coalition put together to make our voice known to him, publicly and loud," says Richard Boyd from the York-Adams CLC.
- The Knoxville-Oak Ridge (Tenn.) Area CLC will hold its annual Workers Memorial Day roll call of deceased workers and candlelight ceremony. This year, participants will pause and remember two workers whose deaths were the result of employers' negligence. In one case, a member of a boss's family was hired into a local UNITE plant through a temporary agency, received next to no training and was crushed in a machine the day after he began work.
- Machinists in North Carolina—where memories of the 1991 fire at the Hamlet poultry plant linger and repetitive stress injuries among poultry workers are a major concern—have bought a day sponsorship at the public radio station in Winston-Salem. For \$150, says Sandy Tanenbaum of IAM Local 2444, the station will mention the Workers Memorial Day observance six times during the day.

Every year, 700,000 workers suffer the aches and devastating pains of repetitive stress injuries caused by ergonomic hazards. Virtually every industry and occupation is affected by RSIs, with workers facing physical and financial struggles for the rest of their lives.

In recognition of the terrible toll such injuries take on



workers and their families, the "Stop The Pain!" campaign is concentrating on three demands: action by employers to fight RSIs; an OSHA ergonomics standard; and fair compensation for injured workers.

Opponents of worker protections against ergonomic hazards include the well-financed, business-backed "Coalition for Ergonomic Research." Its congressional champions once again are pushing legislation to stymic OSHA's work on a comprehensive ergonomics standard, even calling for a halt until a study not yet proposed is completed.

To combat the anti-worker forces, the AFL-CIO has developed an "Ergo Action Kit," poster, fact sheets, petitions, stickers, letters, talking points and fliers. To aid the fight, workers can:

- Investigate ergonomic hazards at their own workplaces and develop strategies to reduce RSIs and back injuries.
- Organize petition and letter-writing campaigns to Congress and the

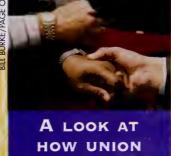
 Department of Labor urging them to move forward on

ergonomic protections.

- Hold a public meeting with members of Congress and invite injured workers and representatives of workplaces with good ergonomics programs.
- Call in to talk-radio shows, write a letter to the editor, talk to local reporters.
- Develop a pledge that local employers or government officials can sign supporting an ergonomics standard and programs to eliminate RSIs.

For more information, contact the AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health, 815 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone 202-637-5366; fax 202-508-6978; or e-mail 71363.1544@compuserve.com.

-Colleen M. O'Neil



ACTIVISTS WILL
COMMEMORATE
THIS YEAR'S
WORKERS
MEMORIAL DAY,
APRIL 28

Wobilize RGANIZE

WHY and HOW union members are blazing an organizing trail.



what he used to see when he pulled into a truck stop. Union drivers would cluster on one side, while unorganized truckers would hang out on the other. If the two groups interacted at all, it was more likely than not to exchange unpleasantries. But all that's changing. Many Teamsters now view such encounters as opportunities to pitch the union. Some, like Lopez, are taking time out from their rigs to talk to nonunion drivers all day long.

"These guys ride the roads," says Teamsters organizing coordinator Gary Stevenson. "They walk the walk and talk the talk. They see Overnite drivers at truck stops and rest stops. It makes sense that they are the ones doing the organizing."

The "ones doing the organizing" are a small army of rank-and-file union members mobilized to organize 9,000 Overnite drivers at 170 terminals scattered across the country. Teamsters who work for other freight companies are recruited and trained to work as project organizers, who coordinate the activities of hundreds of rank-and-file volunteers, who in turn reach out to unorganized drivers at truck stops and terminals and over their CB radios. This massive, coordinated worker-to-worker campaign is how the IBT has amassed NLRB election wins and bargaining orders covering 3,500 workers at 39 Overnite terminals during the last two years.

"Just putting professional organizers out there won't do it," says IBT President Ron Carey. "It is about worker to worker—those who are in the trucks, who are in the trenches, who know what's at stake for the future of our families."

It's no coincidence that unions that are aggressively organizing also are vigorously educating and activating their members in the process. Recognizing that rebuilding the labor movement requires enthusiastic support and participation from members, they're reaching out to the rank and file with education programs that focus not only on *how* to organize, but *why*.

Through a combination of consciousness-raising and nutsand-bolts training, they're generating grassroots support for shifting resources to organizing, making neutrality agreements a top bargaining priority and creating a pool of talented rank-and-file organizers.

This multifaceted
"why-how" approach is in
place at the Food and Commercial Workers, where local
unions are educating members
through a "market share" proje

through a "market share" project and then activating them through the Special Project Union Representatives (SPUR) program. The UFCW market share concept is typical of other union programs in that it motivates members by emphasizing the link between their living standards and union density in their industries—in this case, retail grocery stores and packinghous-

Protection Fair

"We Want Our



The truck stops here: Members are the driving force behind the Teamsters' Overnite campaign

es. Inspired members are encouraged to reallocate resources to organizing as well as to sign up as SPURs, who are trained and placed on organizing campaigns. The international union reimburses volunteer member-organizers for their lost work time.

The two-step dynamic is also at work at the Communications Workers. For years, CWA

has been educating and mobilizing members around industry

> changes and the displacement of union jobs by nonunion ones. Through a "Talk to

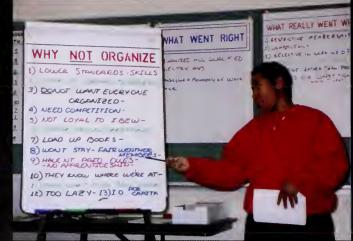
Two" project, for example, the union demonstrates the need to organize and gives members tips on how to interact with unorganized workers. At Southwestern Bell, ongoing education efforts mobilized hundreds and file members in

of rank-and-file members in a comprehensive campaign that last month led to CWA's first-ever

neutrality and card-check agreement covering 3,000 telecommunications workers in a five-state region. "This unprecedented agreement provides a model for organizing throughout the communications industry," says CWA President Morton Bahr.

But one of the most groundbreaking member education-mobilization programs is the building "It is about worker to
worker—those who are
in the trucks, who are
in the trenches, who know
what's at stake for the
future of our families."







trades COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education & Training) program, which since the early 1990s has been enlightening construction workers about the need to reverse the declining rate of unionization in their industries.

The concept originated in the IBEW, and was later adopted by other building trades unions and promoted by the AFL-CIO Building Trades Department. To date, more than 100,000 building trades workers have been through at least one of the COMET program's two parts.

A four-hour session known as COMET I focuses on the "why" question by explaining the interrelationship between organizing and mem-

bers' working conditions. Its sequel, COMET II, follows up with comprehensive "how-to" training on job-site organizing. An extensive train-the-trainer program teaches leaders, staff and members how to implement the COMET program and expand its reach within the rank and file.

The program has been astonishingly effective. Union members in the building trades historically have been reluctant to expand their ranks (which they view as a threat to their own job security), but a poll taken last year found that two thirds now believe they will be much better off if all workers in the industry are organized—a remarkable turnaround attributed largely to COMET.

"You see the transformation take place right before your eyes," says Frank Hanley, president of the Operating Engineers, which so far has trained 10,000 members nationwide. "Members come out anxious to get involved—not just in organizing and political action, but in every aspect of helping their elected leaders conquer the daily challenges they face today." One local, IUOE Local 3 in Oakland, has trained 1,200 members and now has six organizing campaigns under way—and 900 new members—as a result.

"We were so successful in getting members involved in organizing that we had to hire more full-time organizers to cover them," adds Dennis

WHY ORGANIZE

You have to raise consciousness before you can raise wages

ere's a quiz: Of the following, which factor is most likely to influence your ability to negotiate a good contract? (a) A skilled negotiator. (b) The company's profitability. (c) A good relationship with the boss. (d) The extent of unorganized competition in the industry.

You obviously know the answer is (d). (We never said it was a difficult quiz.) But if you asked that question to every union member in the country, how many of them would get it right? Chances are, many—perhaps most—would answer (a).

At least that's been the experience of trainers who are piloting MEMO, a program to raise members' consciousness about the need to organize.

Like the building trades COMET program it was modeled after, MEMO dispels the notion that cleverness at the bargaining table is what produces higher wages and benefits. Participants come away with an understanding that the only way to improve their living standards and protect their jobs is to organize in their industries.

If your union is considering developing such a program, here are a few lessons drawn from

MEMO, COMET and other education initiatives:

- Use participatory, interactive teaching techniques. "The most effective way to raise awareness of the need to organize is not to beat someone over the head with it," says AFL-CIO Education Director Bill Fletcher. "A compelling presentation gives members a chance to express their own concerns and the information they need to come to their own conclusions."
- Connect organizing to bargaining. The most powerful case for organizing comes from showing the relationship between union density and wages and benefits. CWA members at Southwestern Bell, for instance, were influenced by the growth of jobs in nonunion subsidiaries—where the same work drew much lower pay—and its impact on their own bargaining power.
- Follow economic issues with other values. Integrate the other reasons people join unions, such as respect and fairness. "Get people to think about what they want out of life—for themselves, their families and their communities," says Jeff Grabelsky of Cornell University, who helped craft the COMET and MEMO programs.

"Make the connection between the union movement as a whole and the quality of life."

- Focus on workers, not unions. Be very clear about how organizing benefits workers and addresses their issues, says Geoff Garin of Peter Hart Research, which conducts polls and research among union members. "Members don't automatically see bigger unions as a good thing," he says. "Focus on the strength organizing brings to working people, not just unions."
- Convey the excitement and spirit of organizing. Show a video or ask workers to share real-life experiences that capture the excitement and rewards that come from participating in organizing and mobilization campaigns.
- Train the trainer. An education program is only as effective as its trainer. Develop a "train-the-trainer" component that fully prepares instructors for the task and can effectively reach large numbers of members.
- Most of all, have a plan of action. Make sure your education program goes hand-in-hand with an action plan. Provide specific ways members can get involved, including organizing, political action and other campaigns.



Mobilizing around market share (left to right): CWA members at Southwestern Bell, IBEW COMET training in Denver, HERE members in Las Vegas

Whalen, an organizer for IBEW Local 68 in Denver, where COMET graduates organized 176 workers employed by seven companies.

What makes COMET so successful? For one thing, trainers say, it uses interactive training techniques that allow union members to draw their own conclusions. Workers are given information about the industry and union density, but through open discussions, small groups and flipchart exercises, decide for themselves what direction to take.

Another key factor is COMET's keen focus on the link between bargaining and organizing. What appears to resonate with members most—what hits closest to home—is the impact on union bargaining power of the nonunion competition in the industry.

But in COMET's nonconstruction counterpart, MEMO (Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing)—a program now being developed by the AFL-CIO Education Department—trainers are discovering that union members also are moved by a broader discussion of the balance of power, not just where they work but in society at large. "MEMO does a good job of showing why the entire community benefits, socially and economically, from a stronger labor movement," says Ron Judd, secretary-treasurer of the King County (Wash.) labor council, where a MEMO pilot project last year recruited volunteer organizers for local building trades and Teamster organizing drives.

"After members go through these programs, they are ready to conquer the world," says Gary Heald, special projects director at the IBEW. "Our challenge now is to have organizing campaigns that we can send them out on after training."

The IBEW meets that challenge by coupling MEMO with MOP—the Member Organizing Project—which equips rank-and-file activists with the tools and skills they need to become organizers. But the IBEW is not the only union involving its members in the day-to-day tasks of organizing.

"Organizing takes more than money—it takes participation from all of our members," says UNITE Vice President Bruce Raynor. UNITE members, paired with experienced organizers, played a key role in recent organizing drives at Tultex in Virginia and Roadmaster in Alabama.

HOW TO ORGANIZE

Steps to building your own volunteer organizer program

iven the scale of organizing it will take to reverse the decline of the labor movement, one thing is clear. "Member-organizers are the key to building our ability to organize large numbers of workers," says Moe Fitzsimons, director of organizer development at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute.

Some unions recruit member-volunteers to assist staff organizers. Others rely on rank-and-file members almost exclusively to do the organizing. Either way, a volunteer organizing committee requires planning and ongoing attention, and should be tied to an overall organizing program.

How can you make member involvement a key part of your local organizing program? The Organizing Institute suggests the following steps:

- Make it real. Decide on a structure for the program, assign staff to supervise it and give it a name.
- Talk it up. Publicize the program in your newsletter, and emphasize it in speeches and statements by union leaders.
- Recruit the troops. Identify and recruit energetic, committed activists who relate well

to people and who have time to volunteer some weekends and evenings for training and organizing.

- Kick it off. Run a one- or two-day training session that includes discussions on "why organize," target selection, one-on-one conversations and home visits.
- Put them to work. Be ready right away with actual campaign work for volunteers who complete the training.
- Make them accountable. Make clear assignments and establish a two-way reporting system so that volunteers can both give and receive information about the progress of the campaign. Track volunteers' participation on a chart or database.
- Keep up the training. Offer additional training and mentoring to active volunteers.
- Recognize and reward. Reward the hard work of volunteers by recognizing them at meetings and in newsletters, or by holding special award events.

Advanced training for member-organizers is available through the Organizing Institute. For more information, call the OI at 202-639-6200.

They also provided the critical mass needed to turn up the heat on K-Mart last summer and win a first contract at its distribution center in Greensboro, North Carolina.

AFSCME's fast-growing District Council 25 in Michigan is another union that attributes its organizing successes—more than 2,000 new members in recent months alone—to a high level of member involvement. "Our staff start the campaigns, and then we bring in members who actually do the same work," says Flo Walker, district council president. "They know the jobs and they can explain what the union has done in their area."

In fact, rank-and-file members bring so much personal experience and enthusiasm to organizing campaigns that volunteer-organizer recruitment and training programs are cropping up everywhere.

"The workers who are being organized respond best to other workers," says Ann Werboff, organizer for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, which is training 200 member-organizers. OCAW members helped workers at BP North Slope in Alaska win union recognition several years back. "Some of these members have 15 to 20 years on the job, and they know

exactly what kind of work the workers are doing," says Werboff. "They can relate better than anyone."

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers learned a similar lesson several years ago, when its members from Russell Stover's Tennessee factory helped organize workers at the company's plant in Montrose, Colorado. "They could talk to the workers with intimate knowledge because they did the same jobs," says BCT Vice President David Durkee. "It's the perfect marriage." Today, the international union runs a nationwide program that trains hundreds of member-organizers and pays their way when they work on campaigns.

By helping to rebuild their unions, members are increasing their chances of winning better contracts at the bargaining table. But that's not the only benefit they derive from the experience. Members return from organizing campaigns with new leadership skills and greater self-confidence. Says Bud Evans, COMET director for the Operating Engineers: "They've got a renewed interest in the union and in the community, they're reinvigorated and they're ready to stand up and be counted."

THE FALSE PROMIS

It's not a magic wand. It's not more efficient.

But many public officials are more determined than ever to turn government over to private companies.

By Sharolyn A. Rosier

oping to give motorists some peace of mind, California's Department of Transportation (Caltrans) several years ago embarked on a \$44 million earthquake retrofit project on a heavily-traveled freeway interchange in San Diego's Mission Valley. Five months into the project, Caltrans discovered major welding flaws in the steel and concrete reinforcements constructed by a private company. The estimated cost of redoing most of the 15,000 welds—8,000 of which

were already encased in concrete—was \$6 million, a tab the contractor expected taxpayers to pick up.

Saving Our Service

Postal Workers organize on both sides of the border



Mail for sale? USPS workers fight off "Carvin' Marvin"

or the price of a 32-cent stamp, it's a good bet your mail is taking a round trip to Mexico. That call you just made to the U.S. Postal Service's 24-hour information center might be answered by an employee of the private firm Teletech Facilities Management Inc. And that cute little teddy bear in a Letter Carriers' uniform you bought at the USPS Postmark America store was made in China and sold to you by someone from Manpower Inc.

Postmaster General (Carvin') Marvin Runyon brandishes privatization schemes at USPS workers like a pirate with a saber. The Postal Workers union is his chief target—and they are fighting back.

Using new technology that allows U.S. bulk mailers and presorting firms to electronically transmit U.S. mail images across the border, workers at two Mexican plants are paid \$4 a day for a job that pays a U.S. Postal Worker \$11 an hour.

But APWU locals are working with Mexican unions to help organize those plants. And on this side of the border, APWU President Moe Biller vows to aggressively follow the work that is awarded to any private contractor.

Last year, APWU members voted for a special dues assessment to raise \$2.5 million for organizing. The APWU has expanded its organizing staff and, with the AFL-CIO Organizing Department's help, is developing new organizing strategies.

Last summer, thousands of Postal Workers, Letter Carriers and Mail Handlers joined in a nationwide "Save Our Service" (SOS) picket action. And last December, about 150 Minneapolis-area Postal Workers descended on the Mall of America to let shoppers know where those Postmark America trinkets are coming from.



Protecting taxpayers, communities and jobs: Public employees fight back

The debacle could have been avoided if initial inspections of the work had been conducted properly. Unfortunately, the shoddy work went undetected. As it turns out, the job of inspecting and certifying the welds had been turned over to a subcontractor.

But if you think the experience taught state decision-makers a lesson, forget it. The same welding contractor also was hired to work on a freeway project in San Francisco—a shocking revelation made public by the SEIU-affiliated California State Employees Association last year.

The Mission Valley project illustrates a dangerous trend in America: Overzealous privatization advocates are so determined to turn government functions over to contractors that they ignore the facts and override the experts—and jeopardize public safety in the process.

California Gov. Pete Wilson is one of those perpetuating the false promises of privatization. Convinced that market competition is the cure for what ails the public sector, he says his plan to privatize 50 percent of the state's services will cut costs and improve efficiency—despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

But Wilson is not the only one. New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson is so adamant that he fired the state's corrections secretary after he testified before a legislative committee that privatizing prisons would save little, if any, money. Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith took office in 1992 with a promise to cut the city's payroll by 25 percent through privatization—only to find that the city saved money when they

brought work back in house. And Postmaster General Marvin Runyon has gone so far overboard in his ruthless pursuit of privatization (which has earned him the nickname "Carvin' Marvin") that he's proposing to have U.S. mail sorted at Mexican plants where workers are paid \$4 a day.

"For too long, politicians have been praying at the altar of competition," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "The whole issue of reforming government has gotten sidetracked over the last few years by the false idol of privatization."

As the nation's largest public employee union, AFSCME has been a leading advocate for fundamental changes in the way public services are delivered. The keys to improving quality and efficiency in the public sector, the union argues, are to give public workers a voice in decision-making and to cut back bureaucracy. But for AFSCME and other public employee unions struggling to deliver public services in ways that will benefit taxpayers, recipients and public employees alike, widespread and nearly unshakeable myths about privatization are a growing threat.



RKE/PAGE ON

Showing a Better Way

AFSCME members bid and win in Indianapolis

hen Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith took office in 1992, it was with a vow to transfer the delivery of public services to private contractors. Today, he's singing a different tune. He and the AFSCME-represented city workers are working together to improve the efficiency and quality of public services—through a process which has kept much of the work in the hands of public employees.

"You could say we've formed a partnership," says AFSCME District Council 62 Associate Director Linda Ard.

Armed with contract language guaranteeing city workers the right to bid on much of the work, AFSCME took on the challenge of com-

peting with private vendors. When the mayor put the city's vehicle maintenance out for bid, the city workers beat out several large private contractors. In solid-waste collection, AFSCME-represented workers win in most situa-

tions where they are eligible to bid—and now perform about 60 percent of the garbage collection in the city.

The city workers have done so well that they've brought work in from outside Indianapolis. They recently won contracts for fleet services for public facilities, townships and a local hospital—all work previously done by private companies.

When their jobs are privatized, as was the case at Indianapolis' wastewater treatment facilities, city workers can take their union with them. AFSCME members negotiated union recognition and the maintenance of seniority rights as a condition of contracting out.

THE FALSE PROMISE OF PRIVATIZATION



No panacea: Union members challenge the privatization myths

Flanked by conservative think tanks and funding from corporate interests, privatization proponents relentlessly insist that private-sector competition will make the delivery of public services better and more efficient.

Not only is there no real evidence to support these claims, there's plenty of evidence to refute them. The General Accounting Office has conducted several studies showing that contracting out is often more expensive. One GAO report in 1991, for example, found that contracting out cost the Department of Energy between 3 percent and 73 percent more in 11 of 12 cases studied.

Other studies have shown that where privatization produced cost savings, they were the

result of a decline in services delivered—not miracle efficiencies in the private sector. That was the case in Ohio, when a state audit several years ago found that privatization of the state's mental health program—which was supposed to cut state spending by 30 percent—was actually cutting the services patients were receiving by at least that amount.

The truth is that many governments have been forced to abandon privatization after finding it too costly and inefficient. Among the most publicized examples are the public school system contracts with Education Alternatives Inc. that were rescinded after less than three years in Baltimore and one year in Hartford. The state of Maine had to bring its job training programs back in house after costs doubled and productivity dropped under privatization. "And I don't think you're going to see any more privatizing of federal prisons," says AFGE Secretary-Treasurer Bobby Harnage. "The Bureau of Prisons has discovered that it doesn't work."

So if privatization is not a magic path to efficiency and quality, why is the contracting-out furor stronger than ever?

One reason, says Al Bilik, president of the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department, is that privatization gives anti-government forces an avenue for avoiding responsibilities and reducing public access to services. "Politicians think that if they turn public services over to contractors, they won't have to deal with employees or answer to the community," he says.

Another is the encouragement state and local governments get from the federal government. The privatization craze picked up steam under the tax-cutting, budget-axing, regulation-scrapping policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations. In fact, in one of his final acts before leaving office, Bush issued an executive order giving state and local governments the green light to privatize federally-funded facilities.

And then, of course, there's the political influence wielded by large companies that contribute to politicians' campaign funds—a growing reality as large national and multinational conglomerates go into the business of providing public goods and services. "These companies are gobbling everything up," Bilik says. "And their ability to corrupt politics is enormous. They can buy politicians—mayors, city managers and city council members."

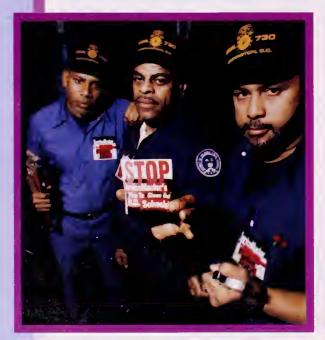
Ironically, these large corporations are stifling the competition privatization is supposed to create—essentially replacing the so-called "public monopoly" with a private one. Last month, Waste Management Inc. and Browning-Ferris

Alerting the Community

Teamsters expose broken promises in D.C. schools

he financially-troubled school system in Washington, D.C., thought it would find budget salvation in ServiceMaster, a private building maintenance management firm. But instead of cleaning up the city's schools, ServiceMaster was just cleaning up.

"ServiceMaster was ripping off the school sys-



Out in the open: How one contractor was cleaning up

tem," says Jim Collins, president of Teamsters Local 730, which represents steam engineers.
"The city inspector general's office found that ServiceMaster had been overpaid by \$6.5 million."

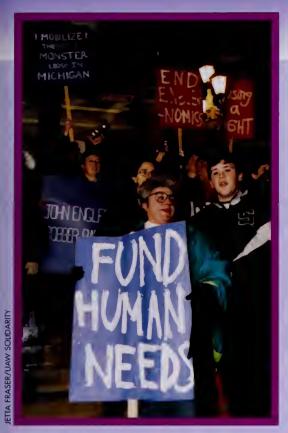
But through a community-based campaign, Teamsters Locals 730 and 639 exposed the truth about ServiceMaster's \$14 million no-bid deal. They convinced the city government not only to terminate ServiceMaster's contract, but to reverse its decision to turn over management of the school system's facilities maintenance division to a private company.

During hearings last November, union members came forward with evidence of a pattern of deterioration, pointing to 70 schools with heating plant problems and the company's failure to provide necessary supplies and replacement parts. One school hadn't received water treatment chemicals in more than two years. Another had experienced a boiler "meltdown" that endangered students and staff alike.

Before long, union members had won the support of teachers, PTA officials, parents, ministers, community activists and city council members.

"The deal with ServiceMaster has been a trail of broken promises," says Phil Feaster, president of Local 639, which represents school custodial workers. "ServiceMaster was just another level of bureaucracy that cost the school system millions of dollars."

In January, the city moved to cancel the contract. Today, union officials are calling for repayment of millions of dollars garnered through over-billing.



In-house efficiency: Studies show contracting out often costs more

Industries, the two largest solid-waste hauling contractors, agreed to settle Justice Department charges that they tried to block smaller trash haulers from entering markets in lowa, Tennessee, Georgia and Louisiana.

Unions throughout the country are blowing the whistle on the questionable contracting practices of these large corporations. The UAW is challenging Michigan Gov. John Engler's decision to award a \$1 million telephone service contract to DCPS Inc., whose owner contributed \$200,000 to Engler's campaign. And CWA submitted a resolution to the shareholders of Lockheed Martin-the nation's largest publicly-traded defense contractor that has moved into areas such as child support collection, parking enforcement and transportation services—requesting a review of the company's unethical bidding practices. Lockheed Martin is one of a handful of large, for-profit companies bidding on welfare contracts around the country-hoping to reap a windfall under the welfare reform law.

Public employee unions also are working for changes in the law to better regulate the bidding process, guarantee their right to bid on the work and monitor the performance of private contractors. Members of AFSCME Council 25, along with the Detroit AFL-CIO, recently convinced voters to approve a city charter amendment subjecting privatization to the scrutiny of detailed cost estimates, city council approval and annual evaluations of work performed.

Forming a Partnership

Service Employees unite health workers

s more families moved their loved ones out of institutions and into group and community homes, Service Employees Local 509 in Massachusetts saw a unique opportunity to create a public-private, labormanagement partnership for quality care.

Mental health services in Massachusetts have been underfunded for years. What the union is attempting to do, says SEIU's Eileen Haggerty, is twofold—organize workers employed by nonprofit mental health facilities and build legislative support for increased funding for those facilities.

The campaign began laying the groundwork in 1994 with internal education to mobilize its

public-employee members around the effort to organize mental health and mental retardation employees who are now working in the "publicly-funded private sector."

So far, the local has organized and negotiated contracts for workers at four

agencies—CASCAP, Better Community Living, Renaissance Club and Cooperative for Human Services. Each agency has agreed to establish a worker participation committee, create a jointly-managed consortium-wide education and training trust fund and investigate the group purchase of health, dental, life and workers' compensation insurance.

The local has organized 750 members in the past year—and the number is growing. "At first, we did our outreach through employers to target members," says Haggerty. "Now workers throughout the state are calling us."

As the privatization rage continues, many public-sector unions are "following the work"—that is, organizing in the private sector and giving contract employees the same opportunity for union representation their public-sector counterparts had. They also are forming coalitions united around a common purpose—to hold elected leaders and private contractors accountable to taxpayers, communities dependent on public services and the workers who deliver them.

"There's a lot that government can learn from business," says McEntee. "We can learn about quality management and customer service and freeing workers to offer creative solutions to difficult problems.

"But that doesn't mean that we turn government into one big extension of the private sector," he adds. "You can stretch it, and pull it and hammer it to any shape you want, but there is a fundamental difference between the missions of the public and private sectors."

Following the Work

AFGE takes the union into the private sector

ith federal dollars spent on contracting out reaching an all-time high, AFGE decided to organize contract workers—and in February settled its first-ever pact with a private contractor. The union now represents more than 2,000 workers cmployed by Hughes Electronics Corp. at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division in Indianapolis.

"This was a unit of highly-skilled federal workers," says AFGE President John Sturdivant. "They were privatized, and we followed that work and organized the unit."

As part of an ongoing program to mothball military facilities, the warfare center was rec-

ommended for closure in June 1995. Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, fearing the closing would wreak economic havoc in his com-

munity, sought private bids to keep the center open and to retain the majority of the current work force. Hughes won the 10-year contract.

In their contract with Hughes, AFGE members negotiated "agency shop"—a provision not negotiable in its federal-sector agreements. And if Hughes is bought by another firm, the contract ensures union recognition by the new owner.

"In most cases, federal employees can do the work more effectively and efficiently, and we will continue to oppose contracting out and privatization of federal jobs," Sturdivant says. "But once we have lost that battle, our policy is to follow the work."

GROSSING BUILDES

The Rise of a Global Union Movement

By James B. Parks



t the busy Los Angeles seaport, 100 cranes were poised to unload freight from the 32 ships in the har-

bor—with another 16 due later that day. But the vessels would have to wait: Longshoremen stopped work on the docks for eight hours. So did dock workers in Long Beach, San Francisco, Oakland, Tacoma, Seattle and Dutch Harbor, Alaska. In Oregon, every port along the coast was shut down for 24 hours.



The work stoppages on January 20 were part of a weeklong series of actions at 105 ports around the world—staged in a global show of solidarity for 500 dock workers in Liverpool, England, who have been out of work for nearly two years.

ILWU members on the west coast and ILA members on the east coast joined dockers, seafarers and other workers in 27 countries in work-to-rule actions, work stoppages, public meetings and demonstrations at British embassies and consulates to protest the privatization, deregulation and casualization of jobs at ports throughout the world. The actions came just one month after dock workers, at a con-

ference in London, had formed an international alliance.

"Dockers are under attack all over the world," says Norm Parks, a member of ILWU Local 8 in Portland, Oregon. "Capitalism has gone increasingly international, and we have to go international as well."

Dock workers are not the only ones who, facing the pressures of an increasingly global economy, are teaming up with

their counterparts throughout the world. From truckers to clerks, hotel housekeepers to manufacturing workers, union members from coast to coast are reaching out for new partners in their struggles against the multinational forces that are threatening their livelihoods.

The Food and Commercial Workers, for example, enlisted the international federation of commercial workers (FIET) last month in International Women's Day protests against Wal-Mart, which is expanding worldwide. Activists in Buenos Aires, Las Vegas, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and more than a dozen U.S. and Canadian cities focused attention on Wal-Mart's exploitation of women and imports of sweatshop-produced goods.

And the Teamsters, as they head into bargaining with United Parcel Service, are hooking up with other unions through the International Transport Workers' Federation. The ITF plans to set up a UPS council and establish an international network of web sites, e-mail, bulletins and other avenues for exchanging information and bargaining strategies. Also on the drawing board is a day of international actions to focus attention on the company's subcontracting and outsourcing, health and safety practices and international human rights standards.

"Corporations coordinate their operations on an international scale, and workers must too," says IBT President Ron Carey.

The globalization of the economy has led to record-high profits for corporations—but also the stagnation of living standards and unprecedented job insecurity for working families. Over the last two decades, American businesses responded to international competition by outsourcing, shipping jobs overseas, cutting their work forces and driving wages down. Today, multinational corporations—which flourished during the 1980s under the free-trade policies of conservative governments in the United States and Europe—freely cross national boundaries in search of the cheapest labor costs and highest profit margins.

"Every worker in the world should unite in solidarity because we all have a common enemy—and it's not other workers," says Machinists President George Kourpias, who chairs the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Committee. "It is the multinational corporations that pit worker



Global union activism: Teamsters tackle NAFTA at the border (left), USWA President George Becker rallies Bridgestone-Firestone workers (below) and Brazil workers turn out to support Steelworkers (bottom)

had already passed, it was a done deal and there was nothing more to talk about," says Brogdon, a member of IBT Local 287 in San Jose. He was one of hundreds of volunteers who passed out "palm cards" to nonunion freight workers to enlist their support in preventing NAFTA from riding roughshod over truck drivers and freight workers from Canada, Mexico and the United States.

The cards explained that Mexican truckers earn as little

as \$7 a day, and that NAFTA may soon give them highway access throughout the United States. "We're not against the Mexican driver. We're against companies making conditions worse for all of us," says Brogdon. "It's about uniting to protect our future."

A year ago, labor leaders from the three NAFTA countries met to devise a strategy to prevent implementation of the provisions that would destroy jobs and undermine highway safety throughout the hemisphere. Three months later, Teamsters from Southern California joined with Mexican truckers and environmental activists in a demonstration against lifting the unsafe trucking ban.

Many other Teamsters, and members of unions in other industries, also are grappling



with competition from low-wage countries—and responding by organizing across borders to help raise wages and working standards.

The IBT recently hosted a meeting in Chicago of workers from throughout North America who are employed by Echlin, a large auto parts chain that has been shifting production south. Bringing together union leaders and members from IBT, UNITE, the United Electrical Workers, the Canadian Steelworkers and the Authentic Labor Front (FAT), Mexico's independent labor federation, the Echlin workers developed a plan to coordinate support in collective bargaining and organizing.

Last September, the IBT and United Electrical Workers also helped FAT open a Workers' Center in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where workers toiling for U.S. and other foreign companies typically earn less than \$4 a day. The center educates workers on their rights and provides referrals to attorneys.

against worker."

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the aerospace industry, where in recent years, two giants—Boeing and McDonnell Douglas—forced Machinists out on strike, largely over the issue of outsourcing. The corporations were shipping work to China and other low-wage Asian countries—and using the threat to try to extract concessions from American workers. Ultimately, the strikes were settled with the Machinists winning precedent-setting subcontracting language.

Later this year, when 46,000 workers in 14 unions begin negotiations with General Electric CEO John F. Welch, they will face a similar reality: The company can shift work to its plants in China, Indonesia or Mexico, where workers earn only \$2 to \$3 a day. The unions are planning a strategic, coordinated campaign, with help from the AFL-CIO and the International Metal Workers Federation.

"Without world labor standards, there really is no bottom to what these companies will do," says Barbara Shailor, the AFL-CIO's international affairs director. "The realities of today's global economy are such that the only way to secure and strengthen American workers' right to organize and bargain is by extending the right to organize to workers the world over."

Bringing Up the Bottom

T's hard to get nonunion truckers to take information from a Teamster when their boss might be watching. But that didn't deter Mike Brogdon, who was on a mission to save jobs. Standing at a truck terminal gate in Buena Park, California, Brogdon held up a sign showing he wanted to talk about NAFTA—and then "all the guys started coming by."

"A lot of people thought that since NAFTA





Worker Rights in the World Trade Agenda

he horsh reality in the new global morketplace is that—as the share of the work force represented by unions has declined—the power lies in the honds of the multinational corporations scouring the globe for the lowest wages and least worker protections.

One woy to help restore the bolonce of power is through the inclusion of workers' rights and bosic humon freedoms in all world trade agreements.

"Freedom of ossociotion, the right to organize and bargoin collectively, nondiscrimination in the workplace and o prohibition on exploitative child labar are essential if the international trading system is to raise living standards for working people around the globe," says Sweeney.

The issue of worker rights in trode ogreements will be in the forefront of a debate in Congress over fost-trock trade negatioting outhority. In a resolution passed in February, the AFL-CIO Executive Council vowed to appose ony expansion of NAFTA unless warker rights and environmental protections are included in the deal—a sentiment echoed by House Minority Leader Richard Gephordt.

The AFL-CIO is working to develop global strotegies to organize companies, industries and sectors of the world economy, and forging new links with key world lobar groups. This year, the federation hosted first-ever meetings in the United States with European trade unions and worker councils, heads of world trade secretariots and their U.S. counterparts and the ICFTU multinational working party. In June, presidents of lobar federations from the world's major industrialized nations will meet in this country and present a workers' program for global growth to President Clinton and the other leaders.

"More must be done to defend working peaple in this ultro-competitive global economy," Sweeney soys. "The condition of workers should be on integral part of trade relationships. That is why lobar federations and lobar unions need to organize and bargain on an international scale—and expand our efforts to work with our sisters and brothers throughout the world."

And four years ago, UNITE helped the newly-formed Dominican Republic labor federation win bargaining rights for unorganized workers in the Dominican free trade zones. Today, almost 3,000 workers are covered by a union contract.

"Borders aren't barriers to coordinating with unions," says UNITE President Jay Mazur. "We knew we had to enter into a strategic relationship with unions that are part of our industry. We realize that stopping sweatshop and brutal conditions—helping them—helps us."

Double Standards of Multinationals

the New Otani Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Dwight Kelly was a cook. Several years ago, neither could have imagined the twist of fate that would send them to Tokyo to meet with officials of the Kajima Corp. But after they were fired for supporting a union organizing drive, Hinojosa and Kelly were part of a delegation led by Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11 that traveled to Japan late last year, hoping to convince the hotel's parent company to call off the intimidation and harassment campaign.

"Companies must realize that injustice is intolerable regardless of its location—the United States, Japan or Mexico," says HERE Local 11 President Maria Elena Durazo. "If companies want to operate in the United States, this should be a basic tenet."

The low-wage workers at the New Otani have been struggling for years to form a union, but the campaign has been stymied by the hotel's refusal to allow a card-check election, its use of scare tactics and the firing of three longtime workers for pro-union activity.

Last year, Local 11 spearheaded a campaign

Worldwide solidarity: New Otani hotel workers take their fight to Japan

on behalf of the New Otani workers on both sides of the Pacific. In June, a delegation of labor leaders from Japan, Europe and North America picketed and rallied outside the hotel. In the fall, when the hotel workers' delegation traveled to Japan, their weeklong visit spawned support from the Japanese Trade Union Confederation and moved U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale to pledge his assistance.

When the AFL-CIO Executive Council met in Los Angeles in February, and 3,000 supporters flooded the streets in a march to the hotel, Japanese unionists staged a simultaneous protest at the Hotel New Otani in Tokyo. The council passed a resolution supporting a boycott of the hotel and urging labor organizations around the world to do the same, and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney announced that he will travel to Japan and attempt to meet with Kajima officials.

The New Otani campaign is a prime example of how unions are building global worker solidarity against multinational employers. By linking up with union members employed by the same company in other countries, American workers are finding new allies in the fight to hold corporations accountable.

An unprecedented level of international solidarity was a key factor in the settlement of the Steelworkers' strike against Japanese-owned Bridgestone-Firestone. The USWA reached out to unions representing workers at Bridgestone's far-flung string of plants. In March 1996, the first-ever World Conference on Bridgestone brought unions from 15 countries to Nashville, where the company is headquartered.

Four months later, on the second anniversary of the strike, Bridgestone workers around the world responded with "Days of Rage."

In Argentina, 2,000 workers staged a three-hour rally and work stoppage, while Brazilian workers engaged in one-hour work stoppages and work slowdowns they called "working like turtles." Union representatives from every Bridgestone plant throughout Europe met in Brussels with top company officials on behalf of the U.S. workers. And major Japanese unions held a press conference in Tokyo condemning Bridgestone management and issuing a strong statement supporting the USWA and demanding a fair settlement.

Bridgestone workers in Japan rallied to the cause when they learned of the company's double standards. In the United States, the company had imposed layoffs and fired workers for exercising the right to strike. In Japan, the company had not put a worker on the streets since shortly after World War II.

s they struggle to adapt to a global economy, nations around the world are looking to the United States as a model. European nations in particular are told to emulate American tax and spending cuts, deregulate corporations and make their labor markets "more flexible." The United States, after all, has the highest wages, the greatest job opportunities, the hottest technology and the loftiest standard of living, right?

Wrong. You might be surprised to learn that the United States has fallen far behind most of its industrialized trading partners in several key measures of working and living standards. In hourly compensation for production workers, the U.S. ranks 12th. In public spending for job creation, training and place-

ment—ninth place. In unemployment compensation-dead last. We do, however, lead the entire pack, except Japan, in one important area—number of hours worked.

Since the mid-1970s, the U.S. "model"—that is, export-led growth, tight money, tax breaks for the affluent, cutbacks for the poor and weakened unions—has caused mass layoffs of workers and managers alike. Some 43 million employees were the victims of corporate "downsizing" between 1979 and 1995. Those who found new jobs had only a 1-in-3 chance

As American workers fall behind, the United States can hardly be considered a model for the rest of the world

By David Kameras

of matching or exceeding their former pay.

The so-called U.S. model has led to an everwidening income disparity between the wealthy and working families. Real wages for most workers fell between 1989 and 1995, with the typical male worker suffering a 6.3 percent decline in his hourly wage. Families increasingly need two, three and even four incomes to make ends meet, leaving precious little time for leisure or family life. One in five workers goes without health insurance and millions more are underinsured. One in four

children is born into poverty, day care is inadequate and middle-class families go into debt to pay for their kids' education.

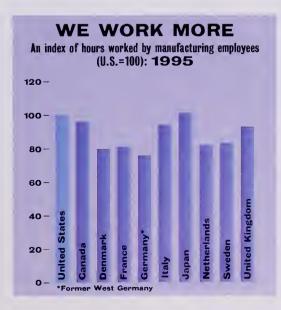
"The American model offers no answer to the fundamental economic challenge of our day," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the World Economic Forum in Switzerland in February. "Our task is to find ways in which high wages translate into higher sales, investment and job growth. New thinking and new initiatives are needed."

What would make the global marketplace work for working people? Here are a few ideas: Establish rules to make companies compete by their ability to produce products of value, not their willingness to impoverish their workers. Set boundaries on financial markets that favor long-term investment over short-term specu-

lation. Invest in education and training. Join workers and managers together to forge new high-performance workplaces. Guarantee and strengthen the basic rights to health care and social security and to join unions. And integrate labor rights protections into global trading accords.

"We need new energy, leadership, ideas and a bold new political agenda for a vibrant global economy that will lift up working people throughout the world, rather than drive them down," Sweeney said.







SUPPORT BY THE BUSLOAD

hen you pick a fight with one Steelworker, you pick a fight with all of us," says USWA President George Becker. That's why every weekend since the middle of February, busloads of Steelworkers from throughout the region have been pouring into the Ohio Valley to support striking workers at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel.

Steelworker locals from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other states are renting buses to bring members to Wheeling-Pitt strike locations, where they join picket lines, visit union halls, serve hot meals and boost the spirits of strikers and their families.

"To have buses filled with union members traveling 10 to 12 hours—just to show their support of the Wheeling-Pitt workers—gives our people a much-needed boost in morale," says Frank Rico of Local 1223 in Yorkville, Ohio.

The primary issue in the sixmonth-old strike is the company's refusal to honor its commitment to provide a defined-benefit pension plan once it emerged from bankruptcy.



s part of a fundraising effort for Hope Children's Hospital in Oak Lawn, Ill., the big hands of Brick-layers helped install more than 1,300 ceramic tiles painted by the little hands of budding artists on the hospital's walls.

The tiles carry babies' footprints, loving messages and colorful images of children, animals and flowers. The members of Bricklayers Local 67 came up with the fundraising idea to help offset the cost of construction of the new facility, which is the first children's hospital south of Chicago.

WEARING THIN



ew Jersey state
employees figured
out a way to
express their feelings
about understaffing and
cost-cutting in the Youth and
Family Services Department.

On "Black Days," employees came to work dressed in black to mourn the "death" of the agency's ability to protect 52,000 at-risk children in the Garden State. On

"Grease Monkey Days," they donned overalls to protest the wasted time and effort involved in driving to state-owned gas pumps in lieu of using credit cards.

The protests were credited with leading to the resignation of the department's dolittle director, but many problems remain. "You are not going to rescue this agency with a knight in

agency with a knight in shining armor," says George Krevet, vice president of Communications Workers Local 1037, which represents 1,000 of the DYFS workers. "You are going to rescue it by staffing it properly. Until we have a commitment to do that, things are not going to get better."

"Black Days" began with 30 staff members in Sussex County and grew into a statewide action.



or the Brotherhood of
Railroad Signalmen, raising
workers' consciousness about safe
working practices is a top priority.
That's why two union members—
Assistant Signalman Jared Fritz
and Signal Maintainer Todd Riggs
of Cut Bank, Mont.—took advantage of winter flakes to fashion a
safety-conscious man of snow.

Along with his safety vest and hardhat, the snowman sports a warning sign that reads: "Safety: No Excuses."

Now that union members have brought the company back to profitability, Becker says, it's up to the union to see that Wheeling-Pitt lives up to its promise.

he Workers Defense League thinks it's time to "appeal to the potential scabs of the future."

"We wanted to let people know why they should honor picket lines," says WDL Executive Director Ron Bloom, explaining why they produced a 13-minute video called "Would You Cross a Picket Line?" and buttons and bumper stickers that proclaim, "I Would Never Scab."

The video highlights a 1994-95 strike by newly organized nurses at Mercy Hospital in Port Jervis, N.Y.,

and features 1199 members explaining why they were forced to go on strike. It will be shown this spring on cable access channels nationwide as part of

> Free Speech TV programming. (Check your local listings.) The bumper stickers and buttons are available for \$1 each (discounts for bulk orders), and the video

Founded in 1936, the WDL is a



ho says conferences and conventions have to be boring? Lots of unions are looking for innovative ways to capture the interest of conference-goers-and finding

that live entertainment, theater and game shows are among the best ways to educate and motivate participants.

At an AFSCME convention last year, for instance, the union held a workshop on mobilizing members that featured the "Oh So

Politically Correct Players" union actors who performed skits on privatization and other workplace issues. Other unions have modeled workshops after game shows such as "Jeopardy"-which test participants' knowledge of politics or job safety. Still others have set up interactive booths, where union activists can phone or write their members of Congress and other elected leaders.

To reinvigorate weary convention participants, some unions are inviting pro-union comedians to add some levity—as Lily Tomlin did at AFSCME's convention.

Tomlin's support for union

for a strong contract, the theater hired the same union-busting law firm used by an old enemy-Eastern Airlines tyrant Frank Lorenzo.

When the theater tried to open with "Beauty and the Beast," it encountered "1,200 people on the line who shut down the performance," says Judd. In a show of good faith, union negotiators offered to limit the picket line to 50 silent marchers if progress was made. When that didn't work, 1,500 people staged a conga linedancing in the street and playing music under the marquee.

The strike was settled shortly thereafter. The new contract calls for pay raises, grievance improvements and other advancements.

WHAT A BACKUP PERFORMANCE

15 musicians at Seattle's h Avenue Theater who ent on strike in February couldn't have anticipated the backup they were about to receive. But when the theater tried to hire strikebreaking performers, King County's labor community turned into a 4,600-strong marching band that staged a series of rallies, congalines and car caravans near the downtown theater-and kept the stage dark for most of the strike.

"It blew them away," says Ron Judd, King County CLC executive secretary-treasurer.

The members of AFM Local 76-493 were among the lowest-paid theater musicians in the country. But when they turned up the heat

> workers stems from the fact that her mother was a nurse's aide



and her father worked in an auto industry plant. "He made auto parts, but he could never afford to buy an entire automobile," she says.

SING DICTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

Just the Facts

The second in an occasional series on statutes important to union members and leaders

illions of workers with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunity in employment—guaranteed by the Americans With Disabilities Act, which became law in 1992. As with other civil rights laws, the ADA gives union leaders and activists an additional tool to use to prevent discrimination on the job.

The following are answers to frequently asked questions about the ADA.

- Which employers are covered by the law? Private-sector businesses with 15 or more employees, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions are covered.
- What is prohibited under the law? Discrimination against "qualified individuals with disabilities"—in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. Discrimination includes not making "reasonable accommodations" for a qualified individual with a disability, unless the accommodation would impose an "undue hardship" on the employer.
- Who is a "qualified individual with a disability?" A person is considered to have a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment (such as a history of cancer), or is regarded as having such an impairment (such as being HIV positive). A "qualified" individual with a disability is one who meets the legitimate requirements of a position and can perform the "essential functions" of the position with or without reasonable accommodation by the employer.
- What can employers ask about during the hiring process? Employers cannot ask applicants whether, or to what extent, they are disabled. If the employer knows that the applicant has a disability, the employer may ask how he or she can perform job functions that the employer considers difficult or impossible to perform with the disability, and whether an accommodation would be needed.
- · What kinds of "reasonable accommoda-

- tions" do employers need to make? A "reasonable accommodation" is a change in a job or the work environment that would enable a qualified individual to perform essential job functions. Examples include: making employee facilities accessible to and usable by an individual with a disability, modifying equipment, job restructuring, providing a reader or interpreter and revising examinations or training. It may also include reassigning a current employee to a vacant position if the person becomes disabled and cannot perform his or her original job.
- What would be considered an "undue hardship" to the employer? Undue hardship is "an action requiring significant difficulty or expense," based on the nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, resources, nature and structure of a business. Generally, this would require more of larger, wealthier employers.
- What about safety concerns? Employers can establish standards that exclude disabled individuals who pose a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others, unless that risk can be lowered by reasonable accommodation. However, an employer may not simply assume that a threat exists—it must be established by medical or other objective evidence.
- How does the ADA apply in organized workplaces? Some questions commonly asked by union representatives include:

Can a "reasonable accommodation" violate a seniority provision under a collective bargaining agreement? So far, most courts have said no.

Given the confidentiality provisions of the ADA, how much employee medical information can unions obtain to assist them in bargaining? The NLRA gives unions a right of access to all information relevant to their representational activities.

Finally, what role do unions have in making reasonable accommodations for disabled employees? The ADA speaks in terms of employers dealing directly with their employees, but under the NLRA, the union is the employee representative and can't simply be negated.

Q. What can a union do to combat sexual harassment?

A. Unions can be an important part of the fight against sexual harassment. You can

encourage workers who are victimized to come to the union for help in handling complaints by taking the following steps: (1) establish an anti-sexual harassment policy through a local union resolution; (2) educate the membership about the issue through speakers, workshops and literature; (3) include training on handling sexual harassment grievances as part of your steward training program; and (4) negotiate anti-sexual harassment language in your collective bargaining agreement.

Q. Where can I find out something about union-busters, like what elections they've been involved in, so I can talk to some other unionists about what happened?

A. The AFL-CIO Corporate Affairs
Department has an NLRB data-tracking service and files on more than 1,300 union-busters that you may find useful. Included in the reports are the

names of organizers who can share their experiences. For information, contact Erika Burch at 202-637-5161.

Q. Some workers think the only difference between a union and nonunion job is the dues taken out of their paycheck. Where can I get information on what a union adds to takehome pay?

A. The median weekly earnings for organized workers was \$615 last year, compared with \$462 for nonunion workers—a union advantage of about 33 percent. The union advantage was roughly 15 to 16 percent in manufacturing, 42 percent in precision produc-

tion craft and repair, 44 percent in transportation and 48 percent for machine operators, assemblers and inspectors. Union members earned 61 percent more in construction and 68 percent more in protective services such as fire and police.

The Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics puts out a monthly report called Employment and Earnings that tracks the union advantage. You can call the folks there at 202-606-6378, or visit their web site at http://stats.bls.gov.

Forward

Home

Reload

http://home.AFLCIO

What's Cool?

911(2)

PUBLICATIONS

■ The AFT's "Helping Your Child" booklets, a three-part series co-published with the U.S. Department of Education, are full of practical information and simple, effective activities that parents can use at home with their young children. The series includes Helping Your

Child Learn to Read, Help-



ing Your Child Learn Math and Helping Your Child Learn Responsible Behavior. The booklets are \$1 each with discounts for

multiple orders. Contact the AFT Order Department, 555 New Jer-

sey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

- A new book, The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?, traces the union's history from its roots in the 19th century to the present, and shows how mechanization transformed coal mining from a skilled craft into factory-style production and how the union adapted. Contact Penn State Press, 820 N. University Drive, University Park, Pa. 16802; or call 1-800-326-9180.
- Child Labor: Targeting the Intolerable chronicles the exploitation and abuse of working children, surveys international and national law and practice and points the way toward effective action to eliminate harmful practices. Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1996 is a worldwide survey of total and economically active population, employment, unemployment, hours of work, wages, labor cost, occupational injuries, strikes and lockouts and consumer prices. Both are available from the International Labour Organization. Call the ILO Publications Center at 301-638-3152.
- The writings of Pittsburgh labor priest Charles Owen Rice come alive in "Fighter With A Heart." A longtime radio commentator and newspaper columnist, Rice chronicles the struggle of Western Pennsylvania working families and articulates his vision of Catholic social justice principles. Published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15260.

CONVENTION CENTER,

WE DO THE WORK

For the last six years, We Do the Work has been producing highly-acclaimed documentaries for public television on issues facing workers, all of which are available on video. Among them: Ties That Bind examines workers' efforts to gain union representation at a shipyard in New Orleans and at a textile factory in Martinsville, Va. Prison Labor, Prison Blues is an award-winning investigative report that goes behind the penitentiary walls to look at the growing controversy over the increasing use of prison labor.

Discounted Lives looks at the struggle for a contract at the Greensboro, N.C., Kmart distribution center that ultimately involved the entire community. These and other programs are available through: We Do The Work, 5867 Ocean View Drive, Oakland, Calif. 94618; phone 510-547-8844.

RESOURCES

Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations Expert Directory is a guide to the principal scholars in the ILR School's resident faculty and extension division. Contact: Cornell, Institute for Labor Market Policies, 194 Ives Hall, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901; or call 607-255-4925.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

In his new book Everything for Sale: The

Virtues and Limits of Markets, columnist and editor Robert Kuttner challenges the prevailing economic theories that extol the unfettered marketplace and its ability to regulate itself-and argues convincingly that government must step in to override markets to temper inequalities. The book is available in local book stores or through publisher Alfred A. Knopf/Twentieth Century Fund by calling 1-800-733-3000.



IT'S SHOWTIME!

What goes through a firefighter's mind as he or she enters a burning building? What's involved in producing the special effects for a science fiction movie? What's it like to be an astronaut, a welder or a bricklayer?

Find the answers at the AFL-CIO Union Industries Show—the premiere

showplace for union skills and union talent, featuring everything from union-made cars to ice cream. This year's show is scheduled for May 16-19 at the Phoenix Civic Plaza Convention Center. In exhibits that cover the size of five football fields, it will give the public a behind-the-scenes look at union members in action-and how labor and management can work together in mutually beneficial ways.

"It's an educational and entertaining experience for the whole family," says Charles Mercer, president of the Union Label and Service Trades Department. "The exhibits, demonstrations and prizes offer something for everyone."

For young people in particular, he adds, the show is a great place to get a first-hand look at the wide range of good jobs available to those who prepare for them.

For more information, call the Union Label and Service Trades Department at 202-628-2131.





April 1997 23

Knight-Ridder and Gannett.

They're icons of corporate greed. They've spent small fortunes fighting their own employees. Knight-Ridder and Gannett are bad news for working families.

The bad news we're following everywhere.

After forcing 2,000 workers at the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press out on strike over the issue of job security, they hired a new work force of strikebreakers and an army of private security guards. For 19 months, they turned their Detroit properties into prison-like structures. Gannett sunk \$250 million into a campaign to destroy the locals of the Teamsters, Newspaper Guild, Communications Workers and Graphic Communications Union.

The strike has ended—but the fight for a fair contract has not. We're launching a strategic campaign and we're taking it everywhere Gannett and Knight-Ridder operate—from Detroit to cities throughout the country and the world.

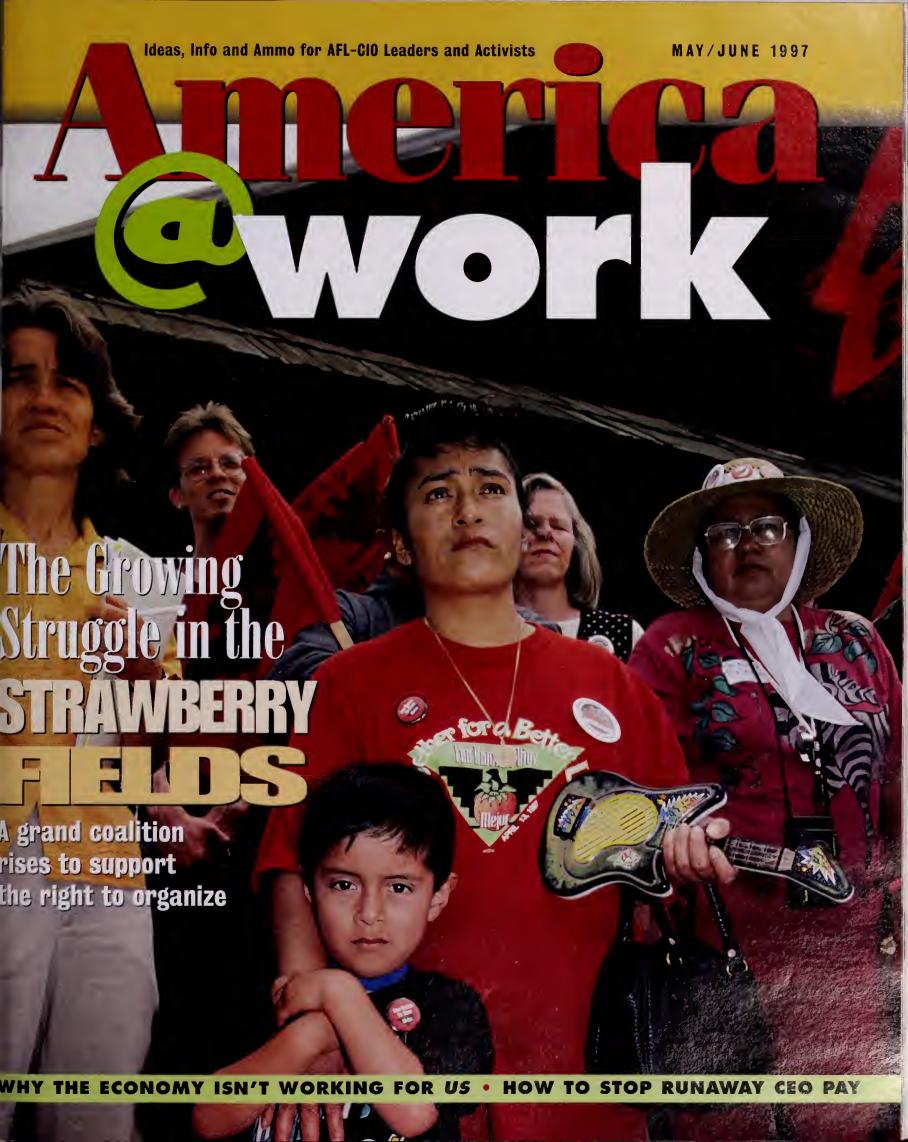
JOIN THE



A mass mobilization in Detroit on June 20 and 21 against the corporate empires of Knight-Ridder and Gannett

For more information, call 313-877-9016.







Ideas and Views From You

THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

@ America@work illustrates the point that we are all in this struggle together in the global marketplace, and that unions are good for workers the world over. The future of the labor movement in America and Africa depends upon our ability to grow and to empower workers to build their unions, to build family, community, the nation and the world. Keep the "ideas, info and ammo" flowing in America@work.—Daniel O'Laughlin, AALC/Nairobi

In the March 1997 issue of America@work, President Sweeney's column, "Our Mission in the Global Marketplace," refers to a running shoe company. The same week I received the magazine, my daughter brought home an article from school dealing with the same subject. It hit home with my children, who have vowed never to wear this company's shoes or clothing. —Carl J. Nappi, New York

ORGANIZING FEEDBACK

@ I really like the new format and the emphasis on organizing in *@work*. I had hoped that since you became America@work...you would start adding some in-depth coverage like the old AFL-CIO News had. As the editor of a local union paper, I found the indepth coverage in the News an invaluable, (and so far) irreplaceable resource for our local paper.—Hedy Hilburn, managing editor, UAW Local 862's On Line My first glimpse of America@work was your February issue, and I am hooked. I view it as not only informative, but as an organizing tool. There is something in every button, picket sign or story useful for organizing. Local 324 of the Operating Engineers takes organizing very seriously. We are a statewide local and organize heavily in the construction industry. We utilize the COMET II and I programs and have over 1,000 of our members trained as COMET activists. With the assistance of the Michigan State Building and Construction Trades Council, a COMET III program is being developed that is going to strictly be centered around multi-craft organizing campaigns.—John Cobe, IUOE Local 324, Kalamazoo, Mich.

A MUSICAL NOTE

@ I have a trivial correction to make. The song "Talkin" Union," discussed in the March 1997 "Voices," was not authored by our famous Oklahoma son, Woody Guthrie, but by some of his revered colleagues in the Almanac Singers, Millard Lampell, Lee Hays and Pete Seeger. I suggest anyone interested in music as part of organizing or any other facet of labor should contact the Labor Heritage Foundation at 202-842-7880. They can put you in touch with someone in your area to assist you with a variety of musical methods to accomplish organized labor's goals.—Lee Graham, Central Oklahoma Labor Council

When you see mions@work and our members@work

and collective power

in our

communities@work,

that's when you see

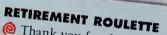


What's your point of view?

Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010.

Fax: 202-508-6908.

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com Internet: http://www.aflcio.org



@ Thank you for the excellent report on Social Security in the Fe ruary issue. Social Security is being dogged on three fronts now: a budget constitutional amendment that would wipe out Social Secu rity; a lowering of the cost-of-living index, which would devastate low-income retirees; and now—as you point out—the privatization of all Social Security funds to the jugglers on Wall Street. Most of us retirees helped build the union movement, and we do appreciate your voice in protecting the benefits that were earned the hard way, down through the years.—Raymond W. Pasnick, Steelworkers

WORKING WOMEN CONNECT

(a) Want something done? "Ask a Working Woman" in Massachusetts, where an 11-member Women's Committee of the state AFL-CIO was formed recently to promote women's leadership in the labor movement. Similar to the goals of the national campaign, the committee is working to create a climate where women feel more connected to the labor movement and, therefore, are more eager to run for offices.—Kathleen A. Casavant, chair, Women's Committee, Massachusetts

CORRECTION

The April issue of America@work incorrectly listed the phone number for ordering copies of We Do the Work, the acclaimed public television series on issues facing workers. The correct number is 510-547-8484.



May-June 1997 • Val. 2, Na. 5 **AFL-CIO** Public Affairs Deportment 815 16th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 Telephane: (202) 637-5010 Fax: (202) 508-6908

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zhrehred



Working Americans need to know they're not alone in their struggles to get by. That's why we're beginning a national dialogue about the way the economy works



Most conventional economic "wisdom" comes from business groups and corporate-backed think tanks. Here are the stories they like to tell, and why they're not true

SPRINGTIME IN THE STRAWBERRY FIELDS

Just as the berries were ripening on the bushes, 30,000 supporters demonstrated in the heart of California's strawberry country—and the budding struggle to improve the lives of strawberry pickers came of age

WHY CEOS ARE RUNNING FOR COVER

Now anyone can go online to uncover out-of-line executive pay, search for the links among the corporate elite and plug in to a cyberspace campaign to stop runaway CEO pay

CURRENTS 2 VOICES

Living-wage

Opinions, letters and e-mail from the field

20 OUT THERE

Fashion statements, bonus bucks, grand finales and other clever ideas

22 SHOPTALK

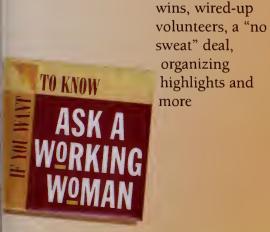
How to minimize the risk of violence in the workplace

23 HOMEPAGE

Upcoming events, critic's choice and the union line







gurans

Wired Up and Ready for Cyberspace

from the Electrical Workers and Communications Workers took their skills to the classroom on "Net Day" April 19 and wired schools in low-income communities around the country to the Internet

The AFT also is developing programs to make sure teachers are ready to guide students into cyberspace.

"Access to the information superhighway will soon be a basic necessity for the good life," says CWA President Morton Bahr, explaining why the volunteer work was geared to lowincome areas. "We cannot allow this country to become a two-tiered information society."



A Quality Care Initiative

proposed partnership between AFL-CIO unions and Kaiser Permanente, the nation's largest HMO, could reshape patient care standards and workplace environments in the rapidly changing health care industry.

If approved by 50,000 members of 14 unions at Kaiser facilities around the country, it will be one of the largest labor-management partnerships in history and the first national partnership in the health care industry. The tentative agreement would give Kaiser workers greater job security, fair ways to organize and unprecedented input into patient care and strategic and marketing decisions. The HMO would gain a competitive advantage by improving quality through worker involvement and by being a health plan of choice for union members. The proposed partnership would not affect any collective bargaining or contractual rights.

"Today we began a process we hope will turn the managed care industry on its head," said Kathy Schmidt, RN, president of the AFT's Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals. "Forprofit HMOs are driving down patient care standards and forcing Kaiser, a non-profit HMO, to compete with managed care providers that see a dollar spent on patient care as a dollar diverted from profits."

"By looking at not only the concerns of workers and management, but also of consumers of health care," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, "this could be a model for other labor—management agreements in HMOs."

Unions participating in the negotiations, which were facilitated by the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, include SEIU, AFSCME, AFT, UFCW, OPEIU, USWA and IFPTE.



A 'No Sweat' Deal

he drive to end the cruel abuses of sweatshops in the global apparel industry got a boost when a presidential task force of labor unions, human rights groups and major U.S. apparel firms reached agreement on a code of conduct in April.

The agreement, which UNITE and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union along with L.L. Bean, Reebok and Nike helped hammer out, covers working conditions, maximum hours and wages.

"We have found common ground and mapped out a route to dignity and respect in the workplace," says UNITE President Jay Mazur. "This is a message of corporate responsibility in this new global economy."

He also notes the agreement is just a beginning, and urges that monitoring of a firm's compliance with the agreement not be left up to the companies alone: "You can't have the foxes watching the chickens."

THE LÍVING WAGE RAGE CONTINUES

nion members on both coasts played key roles this spring in helping low-wage workers in Los Angeles and New Haven, Conn., win living-wage laws.

New Haven's central labor council, along with Painters District Local 11 and a coalition of community and religious groups, mounted a campaign that paid off in late April when the Board of Alders agreed to boost wages on city service contracts to a minimum of \$7.49 an hour on July 1 and \$8.92 an hour in five years.

In L.A., more than 5,000 city contract workers saw their pay bump to \$7.25 an hour with benefits, or \$8.50 without, when the City Council overrode

Mayor Richard

Riordan's (R) veto of a living-wage ordinance. The fight was championed by the city's labor, immigrant and religious communities.

Elsewhere, backers of a New Orleans living wage collected more than three times the number of signatures needed to put the issue on a February 1998 ballot. But Louisiana state Rep. Gary Forster (R), with the backing of business groups, introduced a bill that would ban cities from passing laws mandating pay above the federal minimum.



ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

Nurses. More than 500 registered nurses at the Marian Health Center in Sioux City, Iowa, said yes to Food and Commercial Workers Local 222. More than 300 RNs and technicians at Southside Chicago's Doctor's Hospital won card-check recognition of Service Employees Local 73, while the 950 registered nurses at Hershey Medical Center in Pennsylvania formerly represented by an independent association voted to join SEIU. And nurses at the Wanaque Convalescent Center in Emerson, N.J., voted 45–28 for the Health Professionals and Allied Employees, an affiliate of AFT.

Health care. SEIU locals recently organized workers in a string of nursing homes, including: 150 workers at St. Francis Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Green Springs, Ohio; 100 workers at two Connecticut homes, Bentley Gardens and Waterbury Convalescent Center; and 125 workers at the Nortonian Nursing Home in Rochester, N.Y.

In Miami, workers at La Posada nursing home became the ninth group of health care workers to join UNITE since the union began its health care organizing drive in the area last year. And in the Seattle area, in March alone, UFCW Local 1001 scored five health care organizing victories (two card checks and three elections) for a total of 367 new members.

Higher education. The 2,500 adjunct professors at eight New Jersey state colleges voted for representation by the Council of New Jersey State Colleges/AFT.

Steel. In April, 667 workers at Triumph Twist Drill in Rhinelander, Wis., voted to join the Steelworkers. Three other organizing wins in Ohio and Wisconsin brought into the ranks 500 new members at the Iroquois Foundry, Mayflower Vehicles Systems and Mansfield Brass companies.

Law enforcement. After 25 years with an unaffiliated union, the 130-member Evanston, Ill., police force voted in a landslide to join Teamsters Local 714. The IBT also may soon be on Capitol Hill, where they recently won the first round in a bid to represent the 740-member U.S. Capitol Police force.

Hotels. Score another big victory for HERE Locals 226 and 165 in Las Vegas, where 465 service workers at the Four Queens Hotel and Casino recently won card-check recognition. In Washington, D.C., more than 150 Central Parking garage workers also won voluntary recognition and are now members of HERE Local 27.

Finally— Secretary Herman

It took almost four months, but Alexis Herman survived some nasty Republican political gamesmanship and was confirmed as the new Secretary of Labor in May.

The stalling tactics by the GOP, angered over proposed pro-worker changes in federal procurement rules, were "totally outrageous," and showed GOP "disdain for working families,"



Meeting with the EC: New Labor Secretary Alexis Herman

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said. A filibuster by Democrats and pressure from union workers helped break the deadlock.

The "Ask A Working Woman" Tour

eventeen floors above Chicago's Erie Street, a union delegation learned firsthand about the challenges of working women in nontraditional jobs from half a dozen female construction workers. The workers at Northwestern Memorial Hospital's new pavilion construction site told the delegation-which included Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and Karen Nussbaum, director of the **AFL-CIO** Working Women's Departmentthat their jobs had taught

their unions to fight back.
The Chicago stop was part of a national tour in the AFL-CIO's Ask A
Working Woman cam-

them how to deal with

problems such as sexual

harassment and how to use

paign, which includes a massive survey that "will help in developing women's collective bargaining and legislative priorities," says Johnson. Results will be presented to the White House and Congress during a national Ask A Working Woman conference in Washington September 5–7.

For more information about Ask A Working Woman, call toll-free 1-888-971-9797.



AAARK COLLAAPNE

SPOTLIGHT

A Union City With Resolve

he Pioneer Valley Labor Council in Western Massachusetts is on a mission. Ever since it adopted a Union City resolution in February, it has been out to persuade local elected leaders to formally recognize the right of workers to organize and join unions without interference or illegal opposition from employers.

Already, the CLC has convinced local governing authorities in Springfield, Holyoke and Northhampton to show their support for the right to organize.

And by getting city councils to commit on paper—usually through a resolution—the CLC creates a document of "positive publicity," says Rick Brown, president of the CLC.

"This is a real litmus test to determine support from the mayor, government officials and the community," Brown says. "It says that workers have the right to organize, and hopefully it will cut down on the labor law violations."

"When facing an organizing challenge, management paints unions as negative external forces," he adds. "We are changing the way that people think about unions, and we need community support for that."

Passing right-to-organize resolutions is one of eight organizing, political and mobilization strategies in the Union City initiative, which calls for local unions to work together through their CLCs to rebuild the labor movement in their communities.

Since the initiative began in February, nearly 60 CLCs around the country have adopted Union City resolutions.

Currents

Three Days for Burma

everal thousand Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers and Mine Workers joined college students on 100 campuses and 400 work sites in a three-day nationwide protest against U.S. oil companies that continue to do business with Burma's brutal military dictatorship.

"We are outraged that Unocal locked out our members for eight months in Illinois and sold all of its U.S. refineries and gas stations to raise cash for investment in one of history's most brutal and corrupt regimes," says OCAW President Robert Wages.

The "Three Days for Burma" action in late April was a joint mobilization with the Free Burma Coalition, a large and growing campus movement. OCAW and UMWA members and students gathered signatures on a petition calling for economic sanctions against Burma, which President Clinton issued on the eve of the demonstrations.



A New Leader at the AFT

The American Federation of Teachers has elected Sandra Feldman to succeed the late Albert Shanker and become the union's first woman president since 1930.

Feldman, a native of New York City, is a former teacher who rose through the ranks to become president of AFT's large New York local, the United Federation of Teachers, and vice president of the national union.

In May she also was elected to succeed Shanker on the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

OUT FRONT

ecently I had the great privilege to stand with union brothers and sisters from across America marching in Watsonville, Calif., to improve the lives of 20,000 strawberry workers. While there, I saw firsthand what's right with this country and what's very wrong.

As I looked into the faces of farm workers, union members, students, clergy, environmentalists and civil rights and women's rights workers, I saw America's promise. I saw the hope for a better future that has drawn families to this country for over 200 years. I saw the enduring commitment to the struggle for justice that arrived with those brought to our shores in chains or in economic bondage. I saw men and women, old and young, from at least a dozen nationalities standing together, shoulder to shoulder, to bring fairness and decency to the lives of some of this country's most abused and long-suffering workers.

But I also saw the tremendous

injustice that brought this struggle about. Passing through town, I saw the tiny, crowded bungalows housing two and three farm worker families each. They are not at all like the magnificent homes of the strawberry growers, high in the hills, wrapped in comfort that was paid for with the sweat and tears of laborers.

Strawberry workers are in the fields 10 to 12 hours a day, stooped to the ground, often lacking even clean drinking water and toilets, women sexually harassed, men demoralized because they see no way to fight back. All this for wages that don't even keep their families above the poverty line. But the growers become wealthier with every pint of strawberries these workers pick.

Strawberry growers are no different than many other bosses. They suck up the wealth from our labor and from the robust economy, fighting to keep even the crumbs to themselves. To them, it doesn't matter if we wear white collars, blue collars, pink collars or no collars—to them, we are all strawberry workers.

That's because we are on opposite sides of a huge and growing wealth divide—the gap between workers and the lucky 10 percent of Americans who have 70 percent of all our wealth.

That wealth gap is a big part of what's wrong with America. As Jeff Faux describes elsewhere in this magazine, the voice of business and privilege has grown so loud that its message is all the American public can hear. We have to make our voice heard, and collectively shout the truth about

economic fairness: that hard work deserves the reward of decent wages, safe working conditions and basic respect, and that the status quo of wealth and want is wrong and can be changed.

The labor movement has a great responsibility right now to strengthen itself and grow so that the voice of the many is as loud and clear as the voice of the fortunate few. The promise and hope and dreams of working people, which I saw in Watsonville, convince me that we can and will.

We Are All Strawberry Workers

by John J. Sweeney

Ambassadors of Freedom

ore than 100 trade unionists marched outside the Indonesian embassy in April, demanding freedom for the imprisoned labor leader Muchtar Pakpahan. Jailed since last year and facing the death penalty on trumped-up subversion charges, Pakpahan was denied medical treatment for months and later was diagnosed with a lung tumor. Although he was too ill to attend his own trial, authorities continued the

Among those leading the march were AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and Machinists President George Kourpias. Kourpias will retire on July 1 after serving as IAM president for eight years. He will be succeeded by newly elected president R. Thomas Buffenbarger.

> Standing up for Pakpahan: AFL-CIO's Linda Chavez-Thompson and retiring IAM President George Kourpias

6 America@work

BILL BURKE, PAGE ONE PHOTO

Thought It was Just Me

Working Americans need to know they're not alone in their struggles to get by. Without a strong labor movement, our current economic system is leaving most working families behind. That's why we're beginning a national dialogue among union members and their families, giving them a chance to teach and learn about the way our economy really works—and how, together, they can change things for the better.

By Colleen M. O'Neill

PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT; TOP TO BOTTOM: MICHAEL NEWMAN; MICHAEL NEWMAN; ROBERT BRENNER; ROBERT BRENNER; STEVE SKIOLD; DENNIS MACDONALD; MYR-LEEN FERGUSON; ROBERT BRENNER; MA<mark>RK RICHARDS. ALL PHOTOS FROM PHOTOEDIT, LONG BEACH, CA</mark> even years ago, my wages were just barely getting me by," says Ray Kimbro, a security officer in Chicago. "Today, my wages are the same—but the cost of living has risen. And now I have two kids to provide for. I'm not even surviving.

"I was always taught to get a job and work an honest day and you'll get a fair wage for your labor. It worked for my grandparents. It worked for my parents. Today it isn't so."

Kimbro is not the only working American who has begun to wonder: What went wrong? When corporate profits are up, the stock market is in good shape, unemployment is declining and inflation is in check, why are so many working families working longer and harder just to make ends meet? Who the hell is getting our share?

"No matter what we do, it still keeps getting ahead of us," says Ruth Savage of Wichita, Kan., a 17-year public employee who earns less than \$30,000 a year. "The job I do requires a college degree, which I have had for several years. Yet my income does not seem to go up to match the experience and qualifications that I have. I'm a single parent trying to give my daughter more than what I have had out of life; therefore, I am working a second job."

"In six years working full time, I received only one 15-cent raise, and my wife and I don't have any health insurance," adds Byron Argulla, a nursing home worker and father of two in Los Angeles, who works two other jobs.

Longer working hours and shorter paychecks,

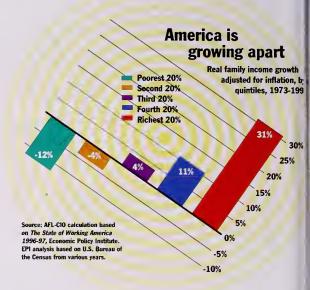
staggering household debts and no time to spend with family—these are the economic facts of life that define working America in the 1990s.

More family members are being forced into the workplace. Young adults return home because they can't afford to live on their own. More than 41 million Americans go without health insurance. Millions more are losing their chance for guaranteed pensions. And nearly one-quarter of the work force today is employed in temporary, part-time or free-lance jobs that offer no security and few, if any, benefits.

That's the story for most of us. By contrast, the richest 20 percent have seen their earnings rise steadily; in fact, they pocketed 98 percent of all the new wealth in America between 1979 and 1993. And so, a country once world-renowned for its growing and thriving middle class is now home to the most uneven income

distribution of any major industrialized nation. America's economic polarization is so pronounced that businesses have responded with what *Business Week* calls "twotiered marketing": For the wealthy, there are cell phones, private banking services, new leather-upholstered sport utility vehicles. For everyone else, there are calling arcades, pawnshop check-cashing centers, "preowned" car lots.

Most working families are convinced that nothing can be done to ease their economic stress and



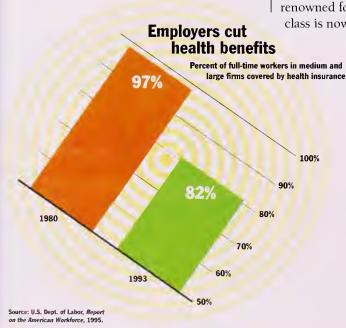
insecurities—that in an era of globalization, when unions are relics of the past, every working American faces the future alone. Corporate propaganda often leads them to blame their struggles on "too much" government, to scapegoat public employees, immigrants, people of color or welfare recipients, or to blame themselves. The real culprits are rarely identified; the real story is rarely heard. (See pp. 10–12.)

For 20 to 25 years after the end of World War II, as productivity rose and our nation's economy grew, most working Americans' incomes grew, too. But in the late 1970s, corporate America responded to the new global economy by closing plants at home, shipping jobs overseas and driving wages and benefits down. Wall Street reacted favorably, encouraging corporate titans to see how low they could go. Elected leaders gave them the green light with their "supply-side" economic policies. And organized labor, with its diminishing numbers, failed to provide the counterpunch working Americans needed in the face of the corporate and political assault.

Profits soared. Executive compensation skyrocketed (see p. 18). The rich got richer. The real income of most working families declined.

"Everything has gone up but my pay. There are so many Americans out here living from one payday to the next. America is one payday away from default."

—A public employee in Nashville who earns \$7.57 an hour, the sole income for himself, his wife and three kids.



"I see workers going home at 11 o'clock at night, 12 o'clock at night, and this is considered normal. The eight-hour day is slowly being chipped away by the CEOs."

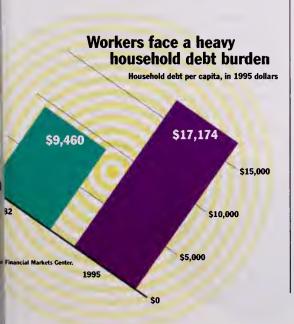
—A woman who sees fewer and fewer people doing more and more work in the Silicon Valley.

"People need to understand that something unfair is going on, a wrong that justifies—or even demands—a remedy," concluded a 1996 Peter D. Hart Research Associates/The Mellman Group survey analysis.

For precisely that reason, the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions and other organizations are developing a comprehensive, multifaceted economics education program—one that will engage working families in a discussion about our economy and what went wrong, and counter the disinformation of corporate-backed think tanks and conservative policy makers.

Adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council last August, the economics education program will be tested in a handful of target sites this year and expanded nationwide in 1998. Initially aimed at union members and activists, the program will use a variety of media to give participants a chance to learn and talk about the economy from a working family's perspective.

Above all, the program will heighten awareness among working famîlies that their struggles are not the result of their individual failures to work hard, play by the rules or make good decisions. Their problems are not personal ones—they are part of a national pattern that can be addressed only through organizing and



collective action.

Longer hours, more part-time jobs and more family members in the work force won't 1960 bail working families 1965 out of their financial straits. But a stronger labor movement will. Union members on average earned \$615 a week last year, compared to the \$462 nonunion workers earned-an annual difference of \$8,000-and also had better health care, pensions and training programs. The union advantage is even greater in services and other fast-growing sectors of the economy and among women and people of color.

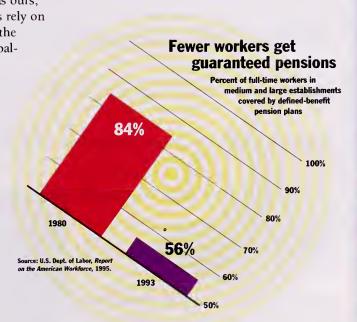
To make the economy work for working families, union members will need to fight to rebuild the labor movement and organize workers in their industries. They'll need to take action in the legislative and political process, and demand that candidates for public office put the needs of working families ahead of corporate interests. And they'll have to take charge of their own capital—the pension funds, 40l(k)s and mutual funds that are invested in Wall Street—and force fund managers to make responsible investment decisions that will improve opportunities for working families.

In an economic system such as ours, where families and communities rely on private enterprises for survival, the power of corporations must be balanced with a government that regulates working conditions and a strong labor movement that gives workers a voice on the job. Today, the balance of power is out of whack; most corporations answer only to Wall Street. But by developing and sharing an understanding of how our economy works, union members will be equipped to counter the biases in the popular media and influence the economic choices our nation makes.



"I lived the American dream. Then the airport took my job, my way of life and stability. I'm 47, a carpenter's apprentice, trying to do a 25-year-old's job."

—A father of five in Louisville who lost his job after 22 years.



THE TOP ON THE ABOUT THE COMONY

by David Kameras

usiness groups and corporate-backed think tanks want America to believe that what's good for them is good for all of us. It isn't true. Just look at the nation's growing wage and wealth gap. And yet corporate theories shape our nation's economic policies—they pervade our universities, schools, workplaces, congregations and, of course, the mass media. Here's a look at 10 whoppers about the economy you're

most likely to hear—and why they're not true.

Myth #10: With our economy roaring, these are good times in America. Our economy is growing, the stock market is booming, unemployment is low. So all is well in America, right? Wrong. There's a euphoria in today's economy, all right, but the only ones experiencing it are the very wealthy. The rest of us are falling behind, big time.

Economic growth is increasing the incomes of the richest families—at the expense of the middle class. As the share of unionized workers dropped from one-third to roughly 15 percent of the work force, America's working families were left behind.

Fully 70 percent of the nation's wealth is now in the hands of the richest 10 percent of Americans. Between 1980 and

1995, corporate profits rose 145 percent and CEO pay skyrocketed 499 percent. By contrast, real average wages fell 9 percent between 1979 and 1994. High-wage jobs were replaced by contingent work. And millions

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAVE KLUG

of working Americans are now without health insurance or guaranteed pensions, working longer hours at multiple jobs and sliding deeper and deeper into debt.

"The typical American family is worse off in the mid-1990s than it was at the end of the 1970s," says the Economic Policy Institute in The State of Working America. "Overall growth does not, under current economic circumstances, lead to improved well-being for typical families."

Myth #9: Everyone is better off when we let our free-market system work. Bet you thought the term laissez faire went out with the horse and buggy. But despite several discredited incarnations as "trickle down" and "supply-side" economics, free-market theories are as pervasive as ever.

The idea is that markets, free of regulation, are efficient, fair and self-purifying. Translated, that means: Government should leave corporations alone, and their unbridled pursuit of profits will result in prosperity and good jobs for all.

The first thing these claims overlook is that the market always has been subject to rules—and businesses would be the first to complain if it wasn't. After all, government protects corporate property rights, intervenes in the market to prevent financial panics and depressions and provides funds for training, research, environmental clean-up and more. The truth is that the only regulations free-market advocates find intrusive are the ones that protect workers and consumers. Businesses don't want to eliminate rules, they want to define themwhich is why they spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year on political contributions.

But government is needed to step in and redress what Robert Kuttner—an economist who challenges free-market myths in his book Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets—calls "the gross inequality of market-determined income and wealth." Over the last two decades, as corporations were freed of their regulatory responsibilities and tax burdens, profits soared while real income for most working families declined. What America needs now is not more regulatory relief, but a government that acts for working families and a stronger labor movement to give them their fair share of a growing economy.

Myth #8: Businesses aren't to blame for driving wages down global competition made them do it. The most popular explanation for our growing wage inequality is the competitive pressure American businesses face in the global marketplace. To hear corporate executives talk, you'd think they had no choice but to outsource to low-wage countries and extract wage concessions from their employees at home.

But in the 1970s, faced with increasing global competition, corpora-

tions had an alternative. They could have chosen to expand markets for their goods and services; instead they chose to increase their profit margins by driving down wages. They could have opted to develop highperformance workplaces to increase efficiency and quality; instead, they decided to abandon working Americans and move jobs overseas.

The decline of the American labor movement encouraged corporations to travel the

"When I go to the store to buy two gallons of milk, three cans of orange juice, a dozen eggs and a small 16ounce jar of peanut butter, it's \$19.20or that one day to

—A 45-year-old widower with six children who works as a night custodian at a Baltimore school. His take-home pay is \$78.50 a week.

feed my kids.



low road. "A major force that kept America a more or less unified society went into a tailspin," says Paul Krugman, a well-known professor of economics at MIT. "Our whole society is now well into a similar downward spiral, in which

growing inequality creates the political and economic conditions that lead to even more inequality."

Myth #7: Free-trade agreements create more jobs. One of the great myths of the 1990s has been the promise that opening borders to more trade and international investment promotes growth, efficiency and jobs.

But recent agreements signed by the United States have only encouraged a faster flight of American capital and jobs, many of them high-wage manufacturing jobs, to low-wage countries. Since its passage in 1993, the North American Free Trade Agreement has helped send a net 251,000 American jobs to Mexico—due in part to a burgeoning trade deficit with Mexico-and another 169,000 to Canada. Job growth in the export sector was offset by currency fluctuations and the collapse of the peso, which made it even cheaper to move manufacturing facilities to Mexico.

Myth #6: Big government is what's wrong with America. Bloated public-sector bureaucracies and burgeoning tax burdens are so routinely blamed for our economic woes that most working Americans would be surprised to learn that government and taxes actually are shrinking.

Over the last 20 years, federal, state and local government employees actually dropped from 19.1 percent of the nation's labor force to just 16.5 percent—and federal taxes as a percentage of national income declined from 22 percent to 21.6 percent.

Big government is not the problem. Rather, it's that corporations and the wealthy have shifted the tax burden from themselves to working families. Between 1953 and 1993, corporate income taxes as a share of the nation's tax revenues took a nosedive—from 31 percent to only 9 percent. Along came the Reagan administration's tax cuts,

and families whose annual earnings were \$560,000 or more saw their taxes go downby an average of \$15,674—between 1977 and 1995. For the average family earning \$48,000, taxes increased by an average

\$287 during the same period.

But for most working families, falling pretax wages-



es—are to blame for declining living standards. "The problem is not what the government is taking out of your paychecks," says Jeff Faux of the

Economic Policy Institute. "It's what the boss is not putting in them."

Myth #5: Raising wages causes inflation and job loss. Every time a proposal to increase the minimum wage comes along, you can count on a chorus of well-paid corporate economists to predict that higher wages will force levelfy or cause prices to critical out of contract the contract of the contract of

force layoffs or cause prices to spiral out of control.

Yet raising wages actually can increase employment, because it pumps more money into consumer purchases. Mounting evidence also suggests that wage increases don't automatically trigger inflation—especially not when workers' earnings are lagging far behind increases in productivity, as has been the case in recent years.

But some myths don't die easily. Every time the Federal Reserve Board raises interest rates, it does so not because of current inflation, but because it fears that unemployment may dip so low that workers will have the bargaining power to demand higher wages.

"The Fed and the bond markets want to choke off economic growth to prevent wages from going up," explains Roger Hickey, codirector of the Campaign for America's Future, an advocacy group that is challenging the Fed's policies. "If they succeed, the economy will slow down—and we'll never catch up with the wage losses of the last several decades."

Myth #4: The federal budget deficit is destroying our future. If we believed everything we heard through the media, we would by now be convinced that the biggest threat to our country's economic security is the federal budget deficit.

A few facts to set the record straight: The federal deficit has been cut in half since 1992—curtailed through a combination of budget cuts, revenue increases and economic growth. Last year it represented 1.4 percent of the gross domestic product, its lowest level since 1974, and its size relative to the economy is smaller than that of most other industrial countries.

Despite claims to the contrary, deficit spending is often a necessity. Without it, the government would be unable to smooth out economic downturns, cope with natural disasters and economic emergencies and protect our national security. It also makes good economic sense—provided the borrowed money is used for wise investments in infrastructure, education and job training that promote lasting growth in the economy.

Myth #3: There's nothing wrong that a little retraining won't fix. Job training and retraining programs are the most frequently proposed remedies to declining living standards in America. Unfortunately, such talk is just lip service without the funds to pay for those programs—and without jobs for retrained workers to take.

It's true that our country desperately needs more and better training programs. Fewer than 4 percent of today's young workers receive any training on the job. And U.S. spending on job training and job creation programs lags far behind spending in nearly every other major industrial nation.

But what good is job training without a growing supply of good jobs? As long as employers continue to circle the globe in search of cheap labor elsewhere, and most new jobs call for unskilled workers

"What happened to the promises that a college education is supposed to guarantee? I'm looking at graduation in seven months, and I'm scared. I'm only 22 years old and I'm \$20,000 in debt."

—A college student at Wayne State University.

who can be hired on a temporary or part-time basis, working

Americans will find themselves training for jobs that don't exist.

Myth #2: Unions are bad for the economy. Whether it's in the halls of Congress, on the business page or in the heat of an organizing drive, employers will stop at nothing to promote the myth that unions make businesses—and our country—uncompetitive. Yet there is little evidence to-support this myth and plenty of evidence to refute it.

Many of the nation's largest and most successful companies and exporters are heavily unionized automakers, airlines, aerospace companies, telecommunications giants and other corporations. Not only are unions no obstacle to high performance, but higher productivity justifies higher union wages, according to Harvard economists Richard Freeman and James Medoff. Unions help raise living standards while improving economic growth by creating a "virtuous cycle": rising wages boost consumption; growing sales encourage efficiency-enhancing investment by businesses; and new investment spurs productivity gains that permit higher wages, economic growth and a repeat of the cycle.

Myth #1: Income inequality is a fact of life that can't be helped. Conventional wisdom has it that our living standards are tied to forces beyond our control. Most working families believe that the only way to keep from falling further behind is to keep working longer and harder.

But declining income, longer hours and job insecurity are common problems in working America, and common problems demand common solutions. The only way working families can regain their share is by working together to change the rules. Only by getting more involved

in politics can working Americans hold elected leaders accountable and make government responsive to the needs of all—not just the monied special interests. And only by rebuilding the labor movement can people who work for a living once again have a voice in the economy.

Have a myth you'd like to share? If we've missed your favorite myth about the economy, we'd like to hear it. Contact America@work at 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908. E-mail: 71112.53 @compuserve.com. Internet: www. aflcio.org.

If Nobedy Spands, Nobed Morks

IT'S TIME TO GIVE BUSINESS A LITTLE

COMPETITION IN THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

ver wonder why so many people who ought to know better take big business' side of an argument? Even many union members nod their heads when some corporate CEO or conservative politician says the country "can't afford" more money for schools, or that making it easier for people to join unions is "impractical," or that national health insurance "can't work."

It's no accident. For more than 20 years, business groups have been training people to argue for conservative economic ideas—over the back fence, on talk radio, in letters to the editor. In effect, they've created an echo chamber for their ideas, which get repeated and repeated until the average person begins to think it must be so.

A dozen years ago, when I lived in Maine, I was invited to debate the case for unions at the state university. When I showed up, there were about 100 people in the room, along with my opponent—an insurance salesman.

You could see he was nervous, that he wasn't used to speaking in public. He had a few notes on 3 x 5 cards and his hands shook a little. But he was game. And, although I think I won the argument, by the end of the debate he had warmed up and wasn't doing too badly. Afterward, I asked him where he got his information. He told me that he'd gone to a program sponsored by a business group on how to argue for conservative economic ideas.

A couple of years later I was driving late at night and I heard him on a talk radio show. This time he was sharp, relaxed and had his "story" down cold. According to his story, American workers were doing just fine. Anyone having a hard time paying bills was either unskilled or had a bad attitude. He said that unions made wages and benefits so expensive that business was "forced" to outsource to Mexico and Asia. He claimed that minimum wages, health and safety regulations and laws protecting consumers against harmful food and drugs were bad economics. And, of course, he said that taxes on corporations should be cut.

His ideas were just as wrong as they had been two years before. But he was a lot more convincing. He used words ("union bosses," "protectionism," "lazy bureaucrats") you hear in the speeches of right-wing politicians or on Rush Limbaugh-type TV and radio shows. It was a classic example of the echo chamber at work.

That's why the effort by the AFL-CIO and its unions to create a national dialogue about how the economy works is so important. It's time that business had a little

competition from labor in the marketplace of ideas. It's time for union members around the nation to start arguing back—to make the case that unions and the progressive policies they stand for are good for all Americans.

Working families need to create their own echo chamber with the message that

own echo chamber with the message that paychecks are more important than stock market speculation, that people are more important than profits.

Understanding basic economic issues is mostly a matter of common sense. Let's take the minimum wage. Most union members make more than the minimum wage and many think it doesn't affect them. But it does. If wages are kept too low, customers won't have the money in their pockets to buy the goods and services that business produces. In a market economy like ours, if

nobody spends, nobody works.

This helps explain why we need government policies—like the minimum wage or lower interest rates—to maintain purchasing power. If you left it

up to business, workers wouldn't have enough money in their pockets to buy the goods they make. The late Walter Reuther, former president of the United Auto Workers, once walked through a plant with a vice president of the Ford Motor Company. The executive showed Reuther the new high-technology machinery that the company had bought, and added that the machines would put six dues-paying UAW members out of work. Reuther asked, how many cars would the machines buy?

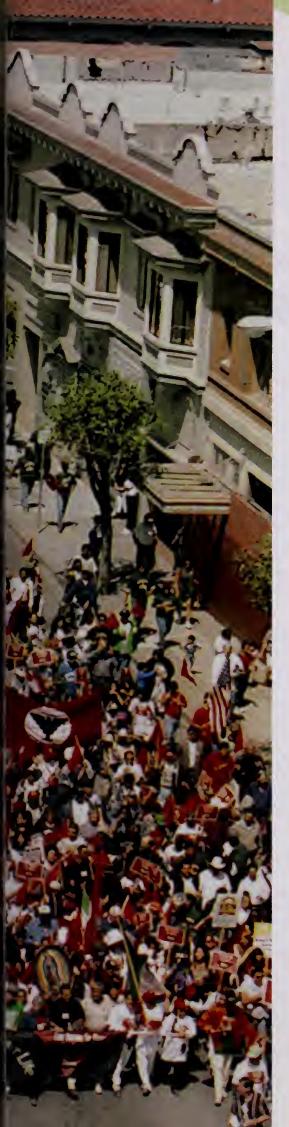
Don't be fooled by people who use numbers to twist the truth. Torture a statistic, goes the saying, and it will tell you anything. For example, the pro-NAFTA politicians have been telling us for the past two years that exports to Mexico and Canada are up. What they don't tell us is that imports are up much further, and the result has been a net loss of more than 400,000 American jobs. Reporting the exports without the imports is like giving you only the runs that one team scored in a baseball game.

The more you hear about the economy from the point of view of people who work for a living, the more you'll begin to spot the distortions in the newspapers and on TV. Arm yourself with some reliable facts that make sense to you, and start debating. Write a letter to the editor or call in on the talk shows. Maybe one of these days you'll meet up with that insurance salesman from Maine. If you do, give him hell.

Jeff Faux is an economist and president of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. His latest book is The Party's Not Over, published by Basic Books.







SPRINGTIME

in the

STRAWBERRY FIELDS

t began shortly after dawn that Sunday morning in April. Arriving first in small groups, then in busloads, then in wave upon wave, a crowd was forming in the heart of California's strawberry country. By afternoon, their numbers had grown to 30,000, filling the entire 2.3-mile march route through the town of Watsonville.

They were farm workers, union members, students, environ-

Just as the berries were ripening on the bushes, the budding struggle to improve strawberry workers' lives was coming of age.

mentalists and members of the clergy and of civil rights, women's and community organizations. They had traveled from 40 states, many driving through the night in cars and buses. They were joined by not only the top leaders of the American labor movement, but by such notables and celebrities as the Rev. Jesse Jackson,

actor Martin Sheen, Feminist Majority President Eleanor Smeal and Sierra Club Director Carl Pope.

And their march on behalf of the struggle to improve the lives of 20,000 mostly Latino strawberry pickers was the largest organizing rally in the history of the Farm Workers.

The April 13 march marked the beginning of a new social movement—and a grand coalition of labor, civil rights, women's, environmental and religious groups—reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s and the days of Cesar Chavez. It raised to a new level an industrywide campaign that has been germinating for nearly a year and with many roots, from organizing and coali-



tion-building to rallying consumer and business support to fighting legal and environmental battles. It demonstrated the united commitment of America's unions, which have mobilized demonstrations around the country, appealed to supermarket owners and elected leaders and sent delegations of organizers to volunteer in the fields. And it sent a message to

California growers that the oppressive conditions under which strawberry pickers work now are firmly planted in the public eye. "Our march today is over," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the crowd. "But we have left our footprints on the soul of this community and on the conscience of this nation."

Since last summer, the UFW strawberry workers' campaign—with help from the

AFL-CIO and the Teamsters—has been drawing attention to the stark contrast between the pickers who are fighting for a living wage and sanitary working conditions, and the strawberry barons who are so determined to stop workers from

organizing that in the past they have plowed under their fields to prevent it.



Teamsters march for justice for strawberry workers

While the industry is booming with annual sales of \$650 million, workers pick berries for up to 12 hours a day and earn only about \$8,500 a season—the second-lowest rate among 19 categories of California agriculture workers tracked by the state.

"We pick the crops that are the hardest to pick," explains Delfina Garcia, a 43-year-old mother of eight who earns less than \$9,000 a year. "I work stooped over eight to 10 hours a day. We often have to work in mud and can't take simple breaks."

Strawberry workers are fighting for such basic necessities as clean drinking water, bathrooms in the fields, freedom from abuses like sexual harassment and the means to



ith help from the legal and environmental communities, strawberry workers are waging major legal battles as part of their effort for improved pay and working conditions.

A federal class action suit charges Salinas Berry Farms—a strawberry supplier for Driscoll, a major shipper—with widespread sexual discrimination. The suit alleges that Salinas systematical-

ly has recalled men workers before women workers and reserved the best jobs for men.

PAUL KURODA

Plaintiff Angelita Melgoza has worked for the company for five years. She and other strawberry workers say women—many of whom are single mothers—regularly are called to work later in the season, costing their families hundreds of dollars a year in lost wages. While the discrimination suit targets Salinas, workers report similar discriminatory recall systems throughout the industry.

The suit was filed with the help of Miner, Barnhill & Calland, a firm that has brought several sex discrimination and wage-and-hour cases in the agribusiness industry.

Some growers, including several Driscoll suppliers, are the focus of a struggle waged by the strawberry workers' campaign to protect thousands of farm workers from exposure to the cancer-causing fungicide captan. Captan is absorbed into the body through the skin. Its use on strawberry crops has increased more than seven-fold in the past six years, though it has been banned from use on 42 other crops.

The campaign has joined with a large environmental coalition—including Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the Environmental Working Group and U.S. PIRG—to petition the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider what is a safe time period before workers can re-enter fields treated with captan.

In addition, the coalition has filed notices under California's Proposition 65 charging that some workers have not been warned about captan's hazards, as required under the law. The campaign is asking that penalties in the case be used to establish a fund to provide medical care for farm workers and their children.

Farm workers also are getting assistance from some 40 volunteer lawyers who recently received two days of training from the National Lawyers' Guild and the Lawyers' Coordinating Committee (a national network of union attorneys) on how to present unfair labor practice cases before the state's Agricultural Labor Relations Board.

improve abysmal living conditions in labor camps, crowded apartments and even garages.

And a new study by the California Policy Seminar found that while strawberry wages account for just 6 percent of all California farm wages, berry farms accounted for 24 percent of warnings issued from 1992 to 1994 by state and federal agencies enforcing safety, health and labor laws.

"The strawberry industry looks at us like second-class citizens," says UFW President Arturo Rodriguez. "Who else has to go out and fight to get decent drinking water?"

In recent years, the industry has crushed three organizing efforts by firing or harassing workers, or by plowing under fields on farms where workers have voted to organize. But by bringing public pressure on strawberry growers to respect their rights to organize, the campaign is aiming to embolden workers. And through innovative and far-reaching strategies, the campaign has picked up strong backing from AFL-CIO unions, central labor councils, community groups, legal advocates and environmentalists.

Last fall more than 40 groups formed a coalition known as the National Strawberry Commission for Workers' Rights to support the strawberry workers' fight for better working conditions and a living wage—as little as five cents per pint of strawberries would raise wages by as much as 50 percent. Since then, the owners of more than 2,000 supermarkets have signed a pledge of support; most recently, the Food and Commercial Workers convinced A&P to support the cause.

AFL-CIO unions also have come to the aid of the strawberry workers by sending volunteer organizers from around the country. In fact, the April 13 march kicked off an organizing blitz that brought more than 100 volunteers from 25 international unions into the strawberry fields, labor camps and the streets of Watsonville and neighboring towns. With spirited caravans, community meetings and home visits, the organizers worked to ease the fears of strawberry workers and educate the community about the right to organize. Legal and environmental activists are helping workers stand up for their rights as well (see box, p. 16).

Around the country, CLCs have spearheaded multiunion efforts to publicize the actions of the strawberry industry and to enlist the support of elected leaders. In St. Louis, they staged rallies at the headquarters of Monsanto—parent of one of the largest strawberry growers, Gargiulo—and took the campaign to a meeting of Monsanto's board of directors and shareholders. In Cleveland, they persuaded public officials to fly a UFW flag over city hall. And in Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and San Francisco, they convinced local authorities to

pass resolutions supporting the strawberry workers' struggle.

"We must all become angry and hungry for justice," Rodriguez says. "With the strawberry

campaign, we're demonstrating that we're in solidarity, that we will do whatever is necessary to bring about changes, to bring about Cesar Chavez' dream."



ore than 100 bilingual organizers stayed on in Watsonville after the April 13 march for a three-week organizing blitz in California's strawberry country.

Representing the largest collection of organizers ever assembled to work on a single campaign, the volunteers came from 20 unions—a reflection of the extraordinary commitment of AFL-CIO affiliates not only to the strawberry workers' struggle, but to rebuilding the labor movement through multiunion organizing activities.

This "Action Brigade" knocked on doors and spoke with 2,000 strawberry workers. In caravans traveling throughout Watsonville and neighboring towns, they delivered their message. And during the first five days of the blitz, the volunteers mobilized 350 workers to turn out for an organizing committee meeting.

Through their actions the organizers also sent a message to growers and other businesses along the production chain.

"The growers are shaken," says Carla Naranjo from UNITE's Southwest region. "When we sent delegations in to ask why workers weren't hired back this year, groups were outside rallying support. They had to stand up and take notice."

The blitz gave many organizers a first chance to participate in an industrywide

ORGANIZERS VOLUNTEER TO SHAKE THINGS UP

campaign and to take new skills back to their locals—and was part of an overall AFL-CIO strategy to help expand the ranks of experienced organizers.

"This campaign has re-energized me," says Ramiro Hernandez, a volunteer from Service Employees Local 105 in Denver. "We are fighting for such basic needs. It brings me back to why I got involved in the labor movement."

"The formation of our historic Action
Brigade points the way to a level and
scope of commitment that are necessary
to conduct industrywide organizing campaigns in the future," the volunteer organizers wrote in a letter to AFL-CIO President
John Sweeney and UFW President Arturo
Rodriguez. "We are certain that the Action
Brigade will stand as a model for similar
joint organizing ventures down the road."

EXECUTIV

WHY AMERICA

ARE RUMMING

Now anyone can go online to uncover out-of-line executive pay.

Untangle the web of CEO salaries, bonuses and stock options.

Search for the links among America's corporate elite.

And plug in to a cyberspace campaign to stop runaway CEO pay.

FOR COVER
The \$39.8 million John Welch, CEO of General Electric, took in

last year would take the average worker 1,612 years to earn. Apple Computer CEO Gilbert Amelio's pay package of \$23.3 million equals the combined average earnings of 945 workers. And the staggering

\$141.3 million Lawrence Coss, CEO of Greentree Financial, pulled in amounts to \$67,929 per *hour* (or \$1,132 per *minute*).

If you think executive pay is out of control, you're right. According to *Business Week*, CEO pay packages skyrocketed another 54 percent last year—to an average \$5.8 million in salary, bonuses and stock option grants. That's more than 200 times the average worker's pay (which increased only 3 percent last year).















CEOs

But just as the 1996 executive compensation figures were being released—during the peak season of annual shareholder meetings—the AFL-CIO blew open the doors to America's corporate boardrooms with the launch of Executive PayWatch (www.paywatch.org), an Internet website designed to help working families monitor and curtail runaway CEO pay.

"For the first time, we are making it easy for workers and investors to decipher what CEOs actually make—and giving them the resources they need to take action, fight back and curb excessive CEO compensation packages," Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka told reporters at the April unveiling of the site.

It used to be that only an accountant or a Wall Street analyst could interpret the complex maze of fine print and footnotes in shareholder proxy statements and tally up a CEO's total compensation package. Now anyone can log on and instantly click to the whopping pay of the CEOs of large corporations-stored in an online database—as well as graphic comparisons to their own or other workers' incomes.

The website also provides easy, simple-to-follow instructions on how to find and use shareholder proxy statements, which means that anyone can track down the runaway executive pay doled out by any publicly held company.

But that's not the only thing that has overpaid executives running for cover. The website also brings to light behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing and exposes the captive boards of directors that rubber-stamp executive sweet deals. The directors who approve excessive CEO pay packages, with little or no oversight, often have close business or personal ties with the top executive.

What's worse is that managers of workers' investments—including pension money, 401(k)

plans and mutual funds, which make up more than half of all capitalization of Wall Street—also are rubber-stamping these excessive pay schemes. "This is one of the ways fund managers, who have a say over workers' money, act against our interests," Trumka said. "Now, workers will have the tools to fight back."

A visit to the site's FightBack room shows users how to take cyber-action against runaway pay. Here's what you can do: Send letters or email to boards of directors. Communicate with the fund managers who are making decisions about our money. Craft a shareholder's resolution to propose at annual meetings. Launch a

campaign in the workplace and community, using an instant flyer generator. Send Congress an e-mail or letter proposing legislative solutions. And e-mail the Securities and Exchange Commission with suggestions for regulatory changes.

Within weeks of its launch, Executive Pay-Watch had scored more than a million "hits," or online visits, and earned a place on the "Picks of the Week" list by the popular search engine Yahoo.

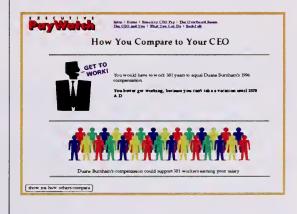
Asked for their reaction to the website, both the Business Roundtable and U.S. Chamber of Commerce declined comment.

The new website is likely to tap directly into a backlash building over executive pay. After two decades in which most working families saw their real income decline, working Americans are angered by what they see as outlandish CEO pay packages. A survey conducted by the Mellman Group and Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AFL-CIO last year, in fact, revealed that 58 percent of respondents were extremely or very angry that "the average CEO makes more than 100 times what the average worker makes."

Ready to launch a grassroots campaign to rein in runaway CEO pay? Just get online.





























CHIE

Where Art Imitates Life

ver since she got the part of Lydia Wright on the hit TV series "ER," actress Ellen Crawford has had the utmost respect for the real-life roles that nurses play.

That's what Crawford told the National Nurses Congress, sponsored in early May by the United Nurses of America, a branch of AFSCME.

Crawford described what she has learned about the challenges nurses face, explaining that the show strives to accurately depict the life-and-death situations in an urban emergency room.

ER's portrayal is so accurate, in fact, that regular viewers of ER may have spotted a green AFSCME T-shirt or two on the set. That's because ER takes place in a Chicago public hospital, modeled after the health care facilities in which many AFSCME members work.



NO VALUE ADDED

after MVP (Most Valuable Player) award of the sports world, but the competition for Least Valuable Director status is pretty stiff. Only the corporate directors with the most conflicts of interest, worst attendance records and poorest achievements were eligible for the low honors in the Teamsters' second annual America's Least Valuable Directors report.

In selecting the 19 LVDs of 1996, the Teamsters looked for directors who serve on several boards with conspicuous problems—such as bankruptcy or overpaying a CEO despite poor stock p rform

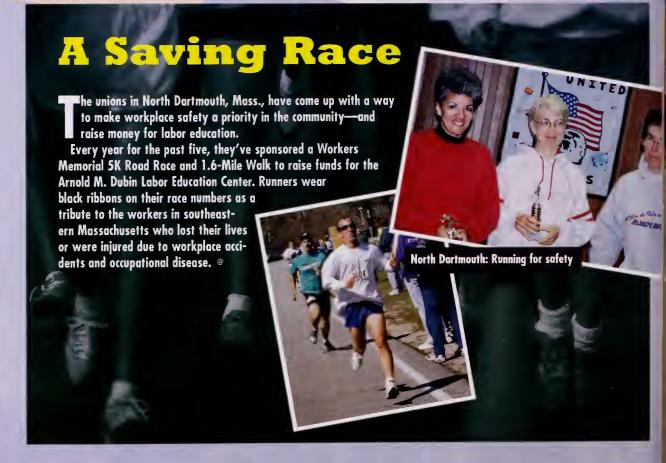
18). The three l
directors were form r Hou
leader Tony Coelho forme
Defense secretary Frank Carlucci
and former State Department
official Lawrence Eagleburger

The LVD list appears to be encouraging more rigorous review in the selection of overseers of big corporations. After last year's list was published, shareholders registered protest votes against some directors at AT&T, Disney and Archer Daniels Midland.

For copies of this year's report, call the Teamsters at 202-624-8100.

The Ghost of Accidents Past

nspired by a recent run of Phantom of the Opera, local businesses in Iowa City, Iowa, decided to sponsor a contest asking schoolchildren to come up with a name for a fictitious ghost in Hancher Auditorium, the performing arts center at the University of Iowa. When one of the kids suggested the name of Oscar Tappan, the Ghost of Hancher Contest became a way to commemorate Workers Memorial Day. Tappan was one of three workers killed during construction of the auditorium. On April 28, a lunch-hour vigil was held outside the auditorium, where a tree was planted and a plaque erected as a tribute to the workers who died on the job.





Make It a Grand Finale

he next time you sign a first contract, make a celebration of it—and send a message to other workers in the area who might be considering joining a union.

That's what newly organized UNITE members at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Miami did. They invited supporters and the media to a public ceremony outside the home, where they affixed their signatures to a blow-up of their new agreement.

Joining in the festivities were more than 700 unionists-including AFL-CIO President John Sweeney-attending the AFL-CIO's regional organizing conference in Miami. "We commend the courageous workers who fought for the most basic issues," said Sweeney. "Other workers struggling to achieve collective bargaining will get the same support that the employees here have."

The 85 employees at the Hebrew Home voted overwhelmingly a year ago to join UNITE. @

Fashion Statement

7 hy would anybody recommend custommade pocketless uniforms for mass transit workers? Ask Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Jim Kerasiotes. He came up with the idea for Boston transit workers because, he says, "transportation workers steal"-and the trousers would increase

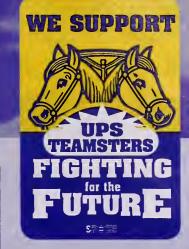
"How would you feel if you were called a thief? It's outrageous," said Jim Lydon, president of Boston Carmen's Union Local 589, an affiliate of the ATU.

Indignant transit workers shot back—with a fashion statement. While reporters looked on, they delivered a pair of pants, complete with free alteration, to Gov. William Weld and challenged him to wear the pocketless pants for a week-or force an apology from Kerasiotes. The evening news featured a clip of the governor furtively evading the union members.

Anonymous on Campus

ho are those folks with the paper bags over their heads? No, they're not New Orleans Saints fans who pioneered the faceless look when the football team was known as the 'Aints. They're teaching assistants at the University of California, and they're making a statement about the chancellor's refusal to recognize their collective bargaining rights.

The TAs on six campuses have been donning the paper bags since late April, when they began a series of rolling strikes and disruptions. Despite a ruling by the state Public Employees Relations Board, the university rejected their petitions for recognition. The teaching assistants and academic student employees belong to the Association of Graduate Student Employees, an affiliate of the UAW. @



Sticking Together at UPS

p against an international powerhouse that took in more than \$1 billion in profits last year, the 185,000 Teamsters who work for UPS face an uphill battle at the bargaining table. Looking to the public and the rest of the labor movement for support, the Teamsters are drawing attention to UPS' corporate game plan with a series of demonstrations and actions around the country. They're also asking IBT locals and other unions to put "We support UPS Teamsters" stickers on every package they send through UPS.

"Every time a Teamster member at UPS sees those stickers, it will raise their morale and remind them that everyone in the Teamsters union is behind them," says IBT President Ron Carey.

BONUS BUCKS FOR ORGANIZING

any unions are finding that one of the most effective ways to organize is through memberto-member campaigns. AFGE gives its members a little added incentive through its Bonus Bucks Campaign, a contest that rewards union members with \$5 for every new member they sign up.

And the AFGE Bonus Bucks are being put to good use. "I turn my award back into the general accounting fund," says Ronnie Kastner of AFGE Local 1613 in southern California. who recruited 76 new mem-

bers working on the Border Patrol. Others are donating their awards, too. "That's how we are able put out a newsletter, get computers and create a website—and show potential members that we have our act together."

Shopfell Questions and answers for frontline activists

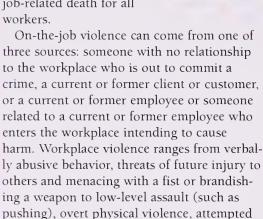
Violence in the Workplace

How to minimize the growing threat of on-the-job assaults

For most of us, violence is the least of our worries when we leave for work each day. But incidents of violence on the job are increasing and workplace assaults have become a growing hazard, particularly for health care, community services

and retail workers.

Statistics show that one of every four American workers will be attacked, threatened or harassed at work in his or her lifetime. In an average week, 20,000 workers are assaulted on the job—and 18 are murdered. In fact, homicide is the leading cause of death on the job for women and the second-leading cause of job-related death for all workers



These are the risks and realities in today's workplace. What can you do to mitigate the chances you or your co-workers will suffer? Here are a few tips to consider.

murder, murder and suicide.

Local unions can start by conducting a survey of members to determine the potential hazards and security problems they face. They can then seek specific solutions, particularly through the structure of a health and safety committee. Ways to minimize the risk of violence on the job include:

- Detailing more security guards.
- Changing office design to provide escape routes for employees.
 - Installing panic alarms, bullet-proof



glass, closed-circuit TV monitoring systems and increased outdoor lighting.

- Restricting entrance in off-peak times.
- Boosting staffing to hold down frustration levels of customers, clients and patients.
- Placing bans on working alone.
- Investigating violent

incidents, verbal abuse and threats.

• Training staff to defuse violent situations and practice self-defense.

If management refuses to respond, workers an file grievances, refuse to work alone or, under certain conditions, contact the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for help, negotiate the necessary solutions in their next round of contract bargaining and launch a campaign on the issue within the workplace and in the community. Keep in mind that several courts have ruled that employers may be liable for negligence in hiring or retaining individuals given to violent acts.

Finally, don't forget to offer assistance to employees who have been the victims of workplace violence. Psychological and physical damage often result from such incidents, including self-doubt, depression, fear, post-traumatic stress syndrome, irritability, decreased ability to function at work and increased absenteeism.

For more information, check to see what resources your local or international union has to offer. In addition, OSHA has issued voluntary guidelines for employers on preventing violence. Call OSHA at 202-219-8151 or visit its website at www.osha.gov.

-Colleen M. O'Neill

Q. My boss says our nonunion competitor is beating us out on bids, and that it's our union's fault for not organizing them. What can I do?

A. Employers often use nonunion competition as an excuse to lower wages, but worker input and higher productivity make most unionized companies very competitive. But if

nonunion shops really are affecting your job security, fight back. First, join your local union's organizing committee and volunteer to talk to nonunion workers. If your local doesn't have an organizing committee, help start one. As someone who knows the kind of problems workers in your industry face, you are qualified to explain the difference a union can make to nonunion workers.

Q. When do shop stewards have the right to participate in meetings between supervisors and workers?

A. Ordinarily, the steward will be an employee's advocate in presenting a grievance to management. But the National Labor Relations Act permits a

worker to present his or her own grievance, as long as the steward is given the opportunity to be present—and any resolution of the grievance is consistent with the contract. An employee can insist that a steward be present at any management interview that the employee reasonably believes may result in discipline. The steward can participate fully in such a meeting but can't instruct the worker how or whether to answer questions. And employers are always precluded from "direct dealing" with workers—that is, bypassing the steward or other union representative in bargaining.

Q. I'm a union rep who's just been assigned to handle arbitrations. What resources are available to help me enhance my skills? A. Check out the courses offered by the George Meany Center for Labor Studies for union-sponsored workers. Call 301-431-6400. Also look into the Bureau of

National Affairs' training and reference materials. Call 1-800-960-1220 or visit BNA online at www.bna.com.

Have a question? Write us at 815 16th St. NW, Room 402, Washington, D.C. 20006; email to 71112.53@compuserve.com; or call 202-637-5010.

ON THE AGENDA

· Action! Motown '97

Join working families from across the nation who will converge on Detroit June 20–21 in a show of support for the 2,000

ACTION MOTOWN '97

workers who withstood a 19-month strike at the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*—and whose fight for a fair contract continues. The papers, owned by Gannett and Knight-Ridder, refuse to fire their striker replacements and are only taking strikers back as jobs become available.

The two-day event will kick off with a teachin June 20; a mass march and rally June 21 will be followed by entertainment.

For more details, call 1-888-97MOTOWN (313-896-2600 in Washington, D.C.) or check out the ACTION '97 website at www.action97.wl.com.

Labor Summer School

The University and College Labor Educators Association and the AFL-CIO Department of Education are sponsoring four regional, weeklong summer schools for union women. Sessions include workshops on organizing, grievance handling, leadership skills, public speaking and other topics. The schools are:

- Western Women's Institute, July 16–20 at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. Contact: Helen Lee, coordinator, at 360-866-6000 x6525. Fax: 360-866-6798. E-mail: lbrentr@evergreen.edu.
- Midwest School for Women Workers, July 30–Aug. 3 at Michigan State University, Kellogg Center, Lansing, Mich. Contact: Elise Bryant, coordinator, at 313-764-0492. Fax: 313-763-0913. E-mail: eliseb@umich.edu.

• Northeast Women's School, Aug. 3–8 at George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md. Contact: Francine Moccio at 212-340-2836. Fax: 212-340-2822.

BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

• Southern School for Union Women, at Radisson Hotel in Birmingham, Ala. Contact: Judi King, coordinator, at 205-934-2101. Fax: 205-975-6247. E-mail: jkinguab.campus .mci.net.

Also, mark your calendar for July 13–16 when Cornell University's Labor Summer School will present three short courses on the challenges facing local unions as they shift their focus to organizing and political action. Designed for union activists, leaders and staff, the courses are "Meeting the Political Challenges of the '90s," "Representing Workers While Organizing for Growth and Power" and "Rank-and-File Volunteer Organizing Training." For more information, contact Cathy Mooney, conference coordinator, at 607-255-4423.

An Organizing Conference Near You

The AFL-CIO's one-day regional "Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize" conferences are firing up audiences from coast to coast. More than 3,000 enthusiastic union activists turned out for the first four events in Seattle, Miami, New York and Los Angeles—where they shared organizing tips and strategies and took to the streets to support workers who are struggling to organize.

Plan now to attend one of the upcoming regional conferences in: Atlanta, June 7; Philadelphia, June 10; Cleveland, June 19; Boston, June 23; Minneapolis, July 17; Chicago, Aug. 7; Austin, Aug. 8; Denver, Aug. 14; and Detroit (to be announced). For more information, call your regional AFL-CIO office or 202-637-5066.

· Art of the Movement

On June 22–24, artists and activists will gather for the 19th annual Great Labor Arts

Exchange at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., where they will focus on ways to use music, drama and the arts to support organizing drives and enhance understanding about the economy. For information on registration and housing, a call Joanne "Rocky" Delaplaine at 202-842-7880 or 202-842-7879.

Great Labor Arts Exchange uses music, art, drama to support unions' message

CRITIC'S CHOICE

Hard Choices in the Fight to Survive

The woman living in Philadelphia's blighted Kensington neighborhood had worked in factories since she was 14 years old. Now those factories are shut down—people are living in them instead—and she has gone from working-class security, to welfare, to abject poverty.

She meets a few women who are working to get the public assistance they need to raise their children. They call themselves the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. They have no organizing experience, but with remarkable boldness and determination, they lobby politicians, stage protests, pitch a tent city and take over abandoned buildings. They are arrested. Their crime? Trying to survive.

The newly released "Poverty Outlaw," an hour-long documentary about these women produced by Pamela Yates and Peter Kinoy, can be purchased by individuals for \$20 and by institutions for \$50 (plus \$5 for shipping and handling) from Skylight Pictures, 330 W. 42nd St., 32nd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10036. Phone: 212-947-5333.

UNION LINE

From the Wine Cellar

Ever wonder which wines carry the union label? For the connoisseur looking for a fine worker-friendly vintage, here are few suggestions.

The United Food and Commercial Workers have contracts with the following labels: August Sebastiani Country; Bartles & James; Beringer; Boones Farm; Burlwood; Carlo Rossi; Charles Krug; Copperidge; Cresta Blanca; Dunnewood; Eden Roc; Franzia; Gallo; Green Hungarian; Hornsby Pub Drafts; Krug; JFJ; Livingston Cellars; Peter Vella; San Antonio; Sebastiani (cask); Sebastiani Vineyards Sonoma series; Sheffield; Sonoma Tier; Summit; Swan Cellars; Trybunol; Turning Leaf; Vendange; Weibel; and Wycliff.

The Farm Workers have contracts with St.
Michel in Washington State under the Chateau St.
Michel and Columbia Crest labels and with Napa
Valley's St. Superie winery, which produces wine
under the same label.

Are you looking for a union-made product or service? Check it out by calling the Union Label Department at 202-628-2131 or by visiting the Union Label/Union Privilege library on LaborNET.



TONY S

When it comes to rebuilding the labor movement, experience is a major plus.

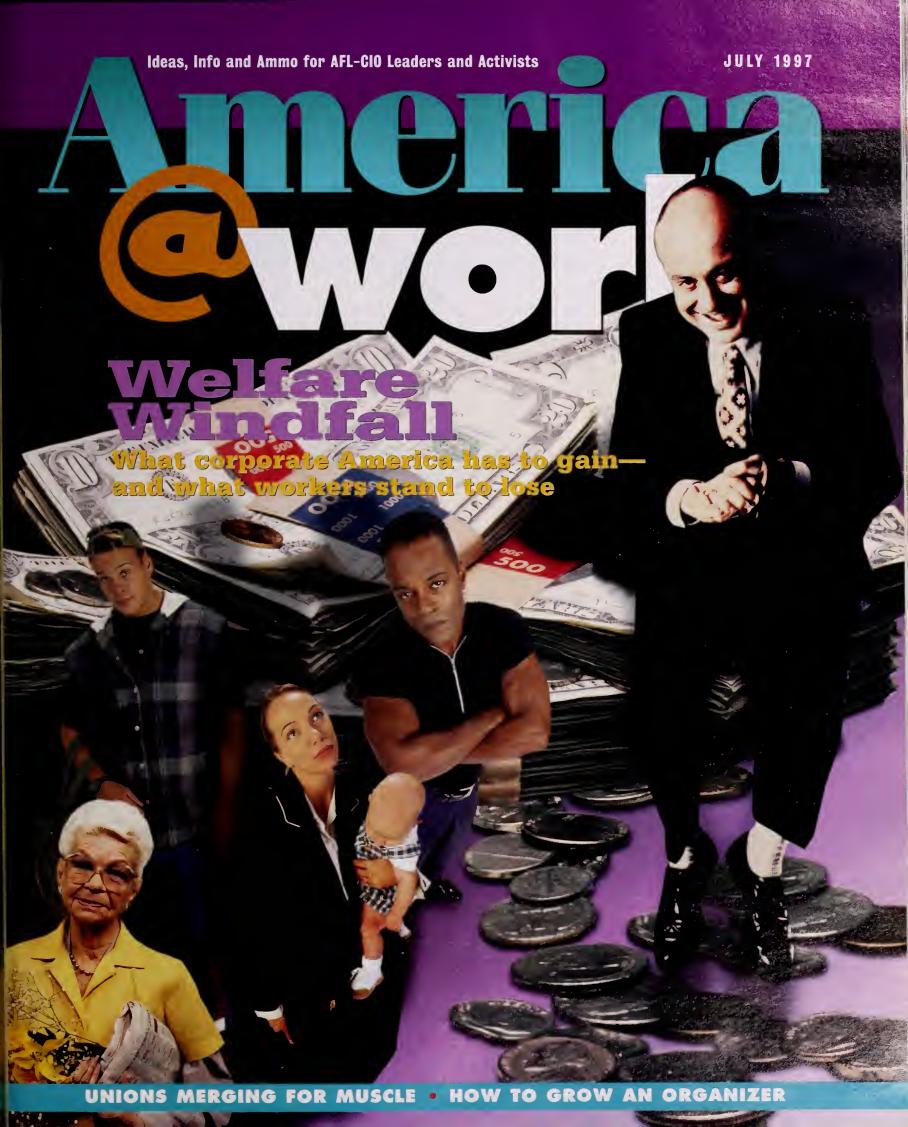
That's one reason union retirees are being asked to participate in rebuilding the American labor movement through Senior Summer—a new AFL-CIO program designed to bring the energy and expertise of seniors into the fight to win back the right to organize for workers who want to improve their lives.

In five communities—Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Seattle, and Bergen County, N.J.—Senior Summer will recruit and train retirees for rapid-response teams that will work side-by-side with organizers from Union Summer. Along with phone-banking and house calls on organizing drives, Senior Summer participants will mobilize retirees for actions and events and take the message of today's labor movement out into the community. They'll volunteer two days a week for six to eight weeks and then be on call for six months.

In other parts of the country, the new program also will provide materials for unions and retirees who want to start their own Senior Summer programs.

To find out how you can get involved, call **1-888-8AFLCIO**.

Organizing from one generation to the next.





Ideas and Views From You

PRAISE AND PANS

@ I am writing to say, as a union activist and editor of the (Crown Cork and Seal Co.) plant and the USWA District 1 newsletter, how much I enjoy your America@work magazine. It is much more colorful and easier to read than the old publication.

I have for some time read with interest your articles about a liveable wage, health care, CEO pay and others. I particularly enjoyed the article "The 10 Myths About the Economy" in the last issue. I intend to pass this information on to my U.S. congressman, Ted Strickland.—Don Spurling, retired member, USWA Local 5684

@ I have no problem with the content of our paper, but the atrocious packaging makes content hard to find....It looks like what the local upscale junior high kids are doing these days with their parents' computers.—Forrest Crumpley, secretary, Federation of Retired Union Members of Santa Clara County, San Jose, Calif.

(a) The flashy, "razzle-dazzle" Parade format is a great move by the AFL-CIO even though [you] violate some basic design principles....A@w easily surpasses anything previously found in the AFL-CIO News. So what is the A@w staff doing right? They are featuring people: members, members, members. They're also providing "field guide" style economic information (though they could do more of this). And most importantly, they provide outlets for people to do things: send away for this, breakout boxes, here's how, read this for more information, etc. While the current recipients of A@w may be limited to functionaries, at least the content is geared for "outsiders" (i.e., union rank and file). I'd even argue it's the functionaries' job to translate the information found in A@w to their own newsletters and publications.—Brian Rainville, IFPTE 17

lt keeps getting better and better. Keep up the good work.—Bruce Popper, president, SEIU Local 1199-Rochester

WHAT'S GOOD FOR WORKERS...

@ America@work's (May/June) demolishing of Wall Street's Top 10 Myths about the economy provides the hard-bitten convincing ammunition needed to organize the additional millions required to empower workers to take back what corporate America would deny: that the wage raises (and other improvements, including a shorter work week) are best for all of America. It should be a basic item in every organizer's kit bag.-William Moody, New York Newspaper

CORRECTION

(a) The photograph on the cover of the May/June issue was incorrectly credited. Ernesto Mora was the photographer.

> America@work (ISSN 1091594X) is designed to inspire and support frontline union leaders and activists with tips, tools and news you can use in the fight to build a strong voice for America's working families. It is the official publication of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industriol Organizations and is issued monthly. Periodicals postoge poid of Woshington, D.C.
> POSTMASTER: Send address changes to America@work, 815 16th St.,

N.W., Woshington, D.C. 20006

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that's when you see

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What's your point of view? Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908.

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com Internet: http://www.aflcio.org

FEISTY DOWN UNDER

⊚ G'day from Australia. I am an SEIU organizer o you send me a few copies of America@work to ere so that I can share it with the trade union officials I have met through the trades hall council in Newcastle? I would appreciate it....They have a very feisty labour movement here. (The) unionization rate is about 60 percent in this region....I love your new mag. "Good onya!", as

There is no magic bullet in privatizing schemes which will increase the retirement incomes of the American people. Some modest changes at the margins of the system can assure solvency for well into the next century, through the year 2012. Best estimates indicate that current tax income to the Social Security trust fund will continue to exceed expenditures, assuming no change in the system's structure. Beginning in the year 2019, the program will have to draw down trust fund reserves until the year 2029, by which time current tax revenue would meet about 77 percent of benefit payments, and so continue in the future. These numbers demonstrate there is no "crisis" in the Social Security program, now or within the next three decades. What is required is an objective, non-political assessment of Social Security's needs beyond that point.—Keith Prouty, chair, Legislative Committee, National Capital

Donna M. Jablonski (Publications Director); Mike Hall, David Kameras, James B. Parks (Assistant Editors); Muriel H. Cooper, Arlee C. Green (Staff Writers). Design: The Magazine Group, Inc.

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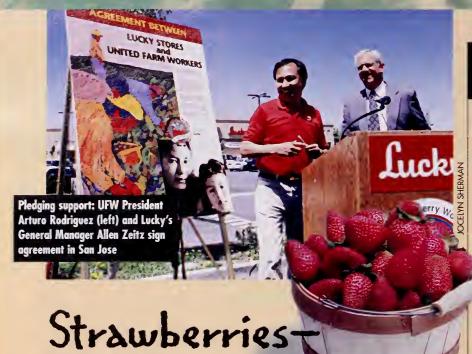
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Shiering



merican Stores, the nation's third largest grocery chain in sales volume, with about 800 stores, is the latest large chain to sign an agreement supporting the rights of strawberry workers. The agreement was announced on May 30 during press conferences in Chicago, San Jose, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. American owns Jewel stores in Chicago, Lucky in Calif-

The American

ornia and Acme in Philadelphia.

American Stores has "shown tremendous moral leadership," says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. The Federation and the Farm Workers have led the fight for the strawberry workers.

Strawberry campaign supporters are hoping other stores will follow the lead of American, Ralph's (California's largest chain) and Dave's in Cleveland in signing a pledge that endorses a living wage and decent working conditions for strawberry workers, as well as the right to organize.

TAX RETIEF

for the Wealthy

You'll love the tax deal proposed by Republicans in Congress if you're going to sell a fat stock portfolio or inherit \$600,000 or more, because it would lower your taxes.

But the rest of us might not be so happy. The five-year GOP bud-

get blueprint will, backers claim, balance the federal budget by 2002 and at the same time provide tax relief (\$85 billion in the House bill and \$77 billion in the Senate version), including capital gains and estate taxes. To pay for the tax cuts, the deal slashes Medicare spending by \$115 billion and Medicaid by \$16 billion, with smaller cuts for other programs including the Earned Income Tax Credit (for lower-income working families), student loans, federal retirement and veterans, housing and transportation programs.

House Democrats developed an alternative tax package—with President Clinton's endorsement—that contained cuts designed to give maximum benefit to middle- and lower-income taxpayers. Unlike the Republican plan, the alternative would set a lifetime cap on capital gains tax breaks, aim a \$500 per child tax credit at middle-class families and target education tax credits

on lower-income students. But a party-line vote defeated the plan in committee and it was killed on the floor just before the July 4 recess.

"The only beneficiaries of the anticipated reduction of the estate tax are the top 1 percent of households," AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor says. That same 1 percent, with \$600,000-plus annual incomes, would trap more than 63 percent of the capital gains tax break.

The burden of these GOP tax cuts for the wealthy and big business is expected to balloon in the years following 2002, hitting almost \$250 billion by 2007 and between \$600 billion and \$700 billion from 2008 to 2017, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

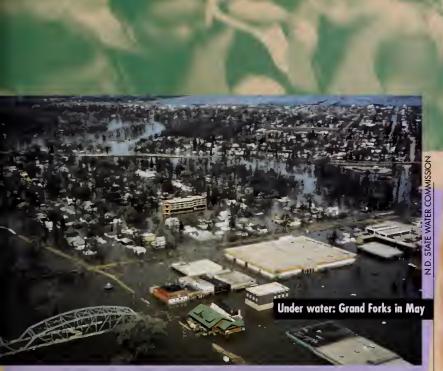
The center attributes most of that huge cost to "the mushrooming costs of three tax cuts primarily benefiting upper-income taxpayers—capital gains indexing, backloaded IRA tax cuts and estate taxes."

The Senate-passed version, while less biased toward the rich, still contains far too many deficiencies. The AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions have launched a major campaign to redirect the Republican tax-tilt-toward-the-wealthy and aim tax breaks at those who really need them—working families.

Spin the Wheel and Salute Working Families

One hundred eighty union members from 17 unions gave the Wheel of Fortune a spin at June auditions for a dozen spots on the popular game show's special Labor Day week programs.

The auditions for Wheel of Fortune's "Salute to America's Working Families" were held in Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles. Twelve winners were selected. The shows will be taped at the Ohio State Fair in Columbus August 1.



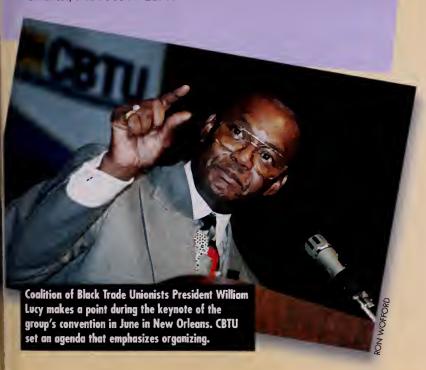
Unions Bring Relief

"The pictures you saw on TV don't do the destruction justice," says Myron Yantzer, a United Transportation Union official who coordinated Red River flood relief by the North Dakota and Minnesota state feds. From northern South Dakota to the Canadian border, some 15,000 union families were among those affected by the April floods.

The most serious damage was in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks on the Minnesota side of the Red River. The Grand Forks Central Labor Council, in the basement of the Electrical Workers hall, was inundated by seven feet of raw sewage. But it did escape the flames that destroyed so many downtown buildings. Members of the Fire Fighters and AFGE firefighters from a nearby air base battled the blaze.

Unions played a major role in relief operations, with Teamsters bringing truckloads of supplies and other unions' locals organizing bands of clean-up volunteers, many of whom had pitched in on pre-flood sandbagging efforts.

If you wish to help, donations may be sent to North Dakota/Minnesota AFL-CIO Relief Fund, c/o Bank Center First, P.O. Box 2197, Bismarck, N.D. 58502-2197.



Vote for the Union Label

The AFL-CIO's Political Department is looking for the union label on office-holders, and you can help.

The Federation is creating a database of current and retired union members who hold elected

or appointed office at the local, state or national level. A fall conference will build their skills and provide support and encouragement that could lead them to higher office.

"Far too many elected officials favor corporate interests over those of working families. Many are wealthy and don't understand the issues of working people," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney says. "We need to elect people who will fight for the rights of working families."

If you are an office-holder or know someone who is, please call toll-free, 1-888-3AFLCIO. Survey forms to copy and distribute to locals in your area are available, too.

SPOTLIGHT

Unity in Diversity

hen Carpenters Local 310 in Wausau, Wis., learned that a group of Southeast Asian refugees was being wooed by nonunion builders, they knew what they had to do.

"We got involved," says Business Manager Marc Kramer. The local worked with the Wausau Area Hmong Association to create a construction job training program. "We became a signatory with the Hmong."

The Carpenters then teamed up with Native Americans in the area. "We worked on reservation housing and got a signatory agreement with the Mohican Housing Authority. This is the first Native American apprenticeship working on the reservation," he says.

apprenticeship classes at the College of Menominee Nation. Linking with the union's established program has been a real boost, says college spokesperson Wayne Towne. "Before, we ran a program and gave the stu-

dents a certificate, but businesses wouldn't recognize it."

Members have been enthusiastic about the diversity the agreements have brought to the local, says Kramer. "Diversity has allowed us to open up new work markets for workers," he says.



July 1997 5

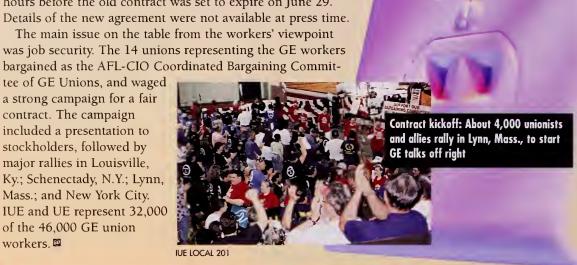
ELLETTE

Lights on at GE

Tegotiators for General Electric, the Electronic Workers and the unaffiliated United Electrical Workers announced a tentative three-year contract agreement just hours before the old contract was set to expire on June 29. Details of the new agreement were not available at press time.

The main issue on the table from the workers' viewpoint was job security. The 14 unions representing the GE workers

tee of GE Unions, and waged a strong campaign for a fair contract. The campaign included a presentation to stockholders, followed by major rallies in Louisville, Ky.; Schenectady, N.Y.; Lynn, Mass.; and New York City. IUE and UE represent 32,000 of the 46,000 GE union workers.



Let It Shine

he Livingston and McLean Counties (Ill.) Building and Construction Trades Council has received a Presidential Service Award from the Points of Light Foundation. Their project: construction of an outdoor classroom—Poetry Place—complete with a stage, outdoor lighting, landscaping, walkways and benches at Sheridan School in Bloomington, Ill. @

ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

Health Care. The 1115 District Council, the Service Employees' newest affiliate, will represent 175 nursing home workers at Fishkill Health-Related Center in Beacon, N.Y. In Decorah, Iowa, not a single vote was cast against SEIU Local 150 in its winning drive to represent 140 workers at the Aasehaage Nursing Home. SEIU District 1199E will represent more than 200 nursing assistants, maintenance, dietary, housekeeping and office workers at Ravenwood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Baltimore, who voted by a 3-2 margin in May for the union. One hundred workers at the Oakland, Calif., Asian Health Services became members of SEIU Local 790 when management of the private, non-profit health clinic agreed to a card check May 22.

The Practical Nurses Federation of Ontario (Canada) voted unanimously to affiliate with the Laborers earlier this month.

Sixty-five percent of Maryland's

state nurses and health care workers have voted for representation by the Maryland Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, an AFT affiliate. The 204 home care workers at Miami's United Home Care Service, Inc., have joined UNITE.

The 165 licensed practical nurses, lab and emergency room technicians, housekeepers and maintenance workers at the Williamson (W. Va.) Memorial Hospital voted for Mine Workers representation May 29.

Steel. Workers at National Southwire Aluminum Smelter in Hawesville, Ky., voted for Steelworkers representation May 2.

Transportation. Workers at Robinson Bus and Neal's Transportation in Chicago voted for SEIU representation, bringing in 550 new members. Robinson Bus workers voted 211-117, and the vote at Neal's Transportation was 79-36.

Of 299 ballots cast at Carnival Airlines May 29, 286 went to the Flight Attendants. AFA also scored an organizing victory at Mesa Airlines, with about 70 percent of flight attendants signing authorization cards. AFA will represent workers at a number of subsidiaries being consolidated by the carrier, in addition to the already-certified Mountain West.

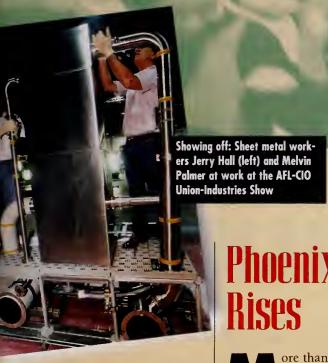
Government. Almost 5,000 Riverside County, Calif., employees said "yes" to Laborers affiliate United Public Employees of California in June. After a two-year dispute, employees of the Pike County Fiscal Court in Pikeville, Ky., voted 74-15 for UMWA representation. Highland Park, Ill., police voted for Teamsters Local 714.

Mining. UMWA won a major organizing battle, and 458 new members, when miners at Costain Coal Co. in Webster County, Ky., voted for union representation May 22.

Services. Janitors who clean the University of Southern California main campus and USC/Norris Health Science campus voted 123-88 for SEIU representation in May.

Food. In Indiana, Pa., workers at Fezell's Shop and Save voted for Steelworkers representation in early April. Organizers from USWA's District 10 and Local 1408 waged the campaign to bring the 195 workers under the union banner.

Agriculture. More than 300 pickle workers with VEL-A-DA, Inc., in Old Fort, Ohio, and those who work with the growers that supply the company, are now members of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, with a contract running through the year 2000. The April 15 FLOC win completes the unionization of the entire pickle industry in Northwest Ohio.



Chavez-Thompson on President's Race Commission

FL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson has hit the ground running as a member of the new commission guiding President Clinton's Initiative on Race to narrow America's racial divisions. Chavez-Thompson and President John Sweeney met with civil rights directors and leaders of organizations to discuss issues the commission will face. Chavez-Thompson is the only Latina and only labor leader on the seven-member panel. She is the first person of color to serve as a principal officer of the AFL-CIO.

Phoenix

ore than 200,000 people visited the AFL-CIO's Union-Industries Show in Phoenix in May to see union members exhibit their skills and products—everything from a mock-up of the U.S. space station (by unions at Boeing) to Darth Vader's costumes from the "Star Wars" movies and a dinosaur from "Jurassic Park" (by the Theatrical and Stage Employes).

The 59th annual show was preceded by a two-day Secretary-Treasurers Conference, during which financial officers from 65 affiliated unions focused on harnessing the clout of unions to build a stronger economy by investing retirement funds to create good jobs and responsible corporate behavior.

Bad Case of HMO Blues

s there a doctor in the union? These days, the answer is "yes!" Members of the medical profession, increasingly frustrated with the way managed care is stripping them of authority to care for their patients, are looking to unionizing as a way of regaining control. The Service Employees and the newly affiliated Committee of Interns and Residents—some 9,000 doctors strong—are launching a national organizing drive aimed at MDs.

Meanwhile, the podiatrists have gotten a foot in the door. Last year, the First National Guild for Health Care Providers of the Lower Extremities was established by Office and Professional Employees Local 45 as a way of fighting controls imposed by managed care. Since then, state podiatric associations from 13 states have joined or are in the process of joining the new union. The organization now has about 7,000 members, says President John Mattiacci.

OUT FRONT

Then I see the excitement generated at our regional organizing conferences, I know that labor is on its way to becoming a true organizing movement.

In the past two years, the AFL-CIO has been challenging every national and local union, every CLC, every state fed and every building trades council to join us in a national organizing campaign to rebuild our membership and rekindle our movement. We at headquarters have taken the lead by creating the first AFL-CIO Organizing Department and pledging to spend one-third of our budget on organizing; beginning new programs such as Union Summer, Senior Summer and Working Women Organize to support organizing; tripling the size of the Organizing Institute; planning a new solidarity and rapid response team to help workers involved in organizing and first-contract campaigns; and taking the "right to

organize" case to the public and to public officials. But from Washington, D.C., we can only pave the way. You have

to roll out the heavy artillery. And you are! People come to the Regional Organizing Conferences

knowing they are not participating in one-day events; they are creating multi-union action teams for sustained organizing efforts.

Miami is a good example. Five events were planned around the April conference, supporting organizing efforts by different unions. Unions and CLCs in Southeast Florida are finding new ways of working together to train organizers. And the leadership group that formed to plan the conference still gets together regularly to chart organizing strategies. In Boston recently, when we asked union leaders to pledge to devote more resources to organizing, some literally jumped from their seats to shout, "I'll take the pledge!"

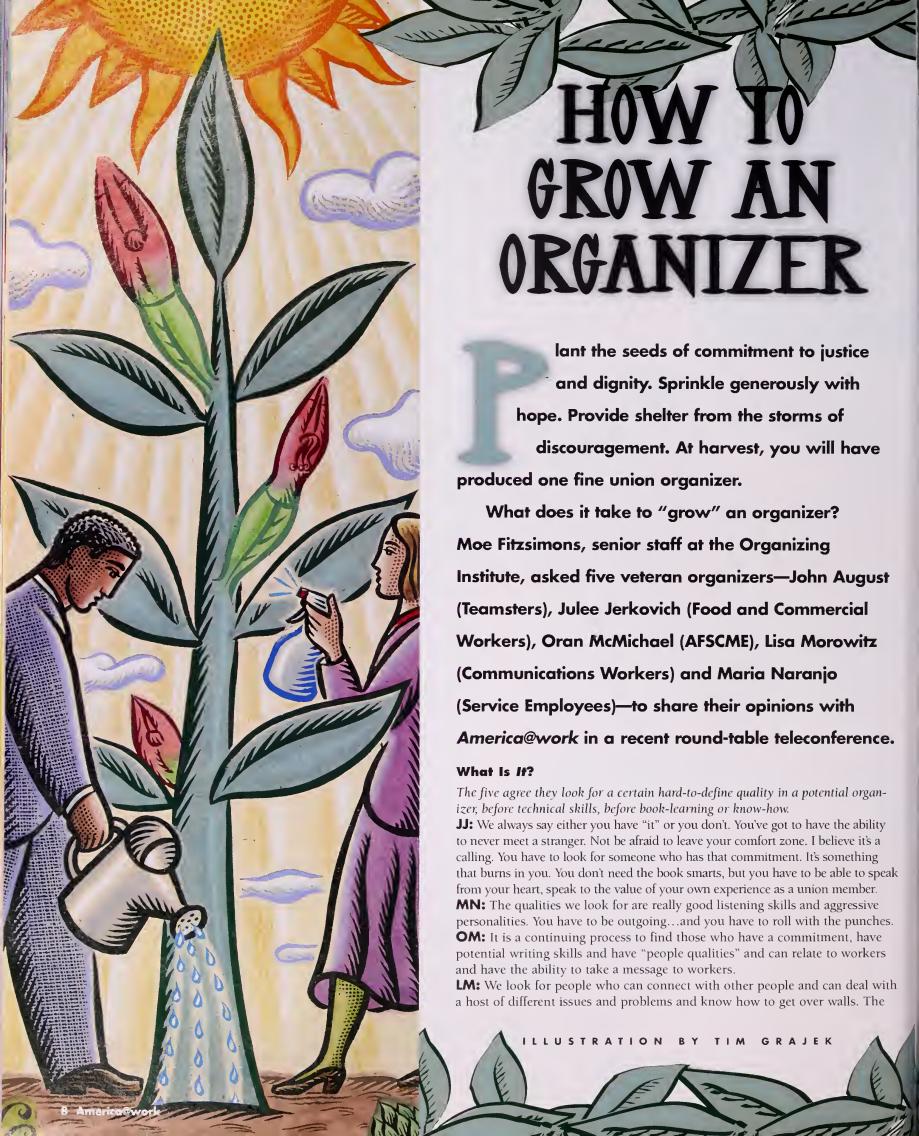
The actions around the conferences have real impact. About a week after the Los Angeles conference, janitors who clean the University of Southern California's main campus and Norris Health Science campus voted for the Service Employees—a victory SEIU attributed in part to the mobilization efforts promoted at the forum.

The Regional Organizing Conferences also have built momentum for our "Union Cities" framework for changing the way America works, community by community. So far, at least 83 CLCs have signed on for Union Cities. They have pledged to organize, mobilize, build political power and community coalitions, promote community and economic development, educate union members about the realities for working families in today's economy, generate support for the right to organize and reflect membership diversity in leadership.

We are changing the way we organize and it's working, increasing our membership, our political clout and our ability to drive the national agenda on behalf of working families. That's the way we win at the bargaining table and at the ballot box! That's the way we fight for the families and future of all working people.

by John J. Sweeney















Maria Naranjo

Julee Jerkovich

Oran McMichael

Moe Fitzsimons

ability to think through issues is the key. There's a mythological notion that organizing is handing out flyers and smiling. It's a struggle, and keeping that up is one of the hardest things. So the people who wind up being good at it are the people who have it in their blood. **JA:** I look for someone who can articulate a sense of justice and can articulate the notion of change. Frankly, it doesn't matter what their background is if they can do that.

Nothing Beats Experience

Newly organized workers, fresh from the organizing campaigns that made them a part of the labor movement, often are charged up and anxious to bring in new members.

MN: The commercial janitors who won recognition campaigns in the last three to four years are a lot more active and a lot more excited and understand the bigger picture of why we need to organize and what it means to organize. Our [longer-term] members, who maybe never went on an organizing drive in their lives, must struggle to understand.... We're trying to bridge that gap and bring old and new members together. **OM:** Someone who has gone through a campaign tends to have a better understanding of

goals and missions versus a rank-and-filer who comes out of the fold and has never been involved in an organizing campaign, but may have been involved in contract negotiations. JJ: I use the term "warriors." If they have been

through a campaign, they've been through war. These people are fired up to go help the next group.

Growing Leadership

Even people with natural ability need to be developed. "How do you go about doing this?" Fitzsimons asks. "Do you sit them in a classroom, throw them into the field or a little bit of both?" **JA:** You can tell pretty quickly if somebody is going to organize or not. You can train some people forever, and it's not going to make a difference. I think you can develop people.... It's pretty much on-the-job, teamed with an experienced person. But that experienced person is clear standards and messages.... I agree that

having intensive training periodically is important for organizers to rededicate themselves and reevaluate organizing techniques and principles. Organizers should be doing that training, but educators can help develop format, providing more interaction. I know some unions are trying...mentors that [new organizers can] touch base with on a regular basis.

JJ: You can't train [a new organizer] to face rejection or disappointment. You can have mock home calls and say some will slam the door, but it is very difficult when the door is slammed or you get an obscene gesture as you're handbilling. They have to experience those feelings in the real world in order to grow.

LM: Classes have a real value, not just for substantive information, but for bringing people together for intense work....At the Organizing Institute, they're working through dinner with few breaks, and that process of intensity is actually a good learning process. For the rank-and-file people we pull off the job, it can give an initial shock.

The Send-Off

Eventually, the strings must be cut. How can you tell when an organizer is ready to take flight and run a campaign?

MN: When I don't have to check on a person as much, they're ready to take responsibility in a campaign. If they can think strategically, make a plan on how we are going to win, move the workers, lead the workers. If I have to check in every two days, I wouldn't send that person out.

JJ: You can see it in them. Sometimes they will find their own leads. Sort of like an excitement that builds. They think independently.

JA: The key to that is observing people with workers. Whether they command respect and give respect, and command trust and are able

to lead people. Can they help workers see their working lives differently? That's the real test.

Learning to Let Go and Move On

So your new organizer spends three or four very intense months organizing workers somewhere. Emotions run high. Then it's over. How do you help your new organizer walk away? How do you help with the disappointment if the campaign falls short of its goals?

JA: When you finish your campaign, I think there is never an easy way to walk away. It's up to the union to integrate the people who are going to be representing the workers. Otherwise, an organizer will always have separation anxiety. The key is incumbent upon the union to get the reps who are going to be working with the shop involved during the organizing campaign.

LM: When you build intense relationships, it's not always necessary to go 100 percent cold turkey. You can slowly wean away.

OM: As we developed a local, the servicing component would start to come in. The hardest part is getting an organizer to realize the

> assignment was organizing, not servicing.

JJ: We do NLRB elections, so we're in, we're out. The disappointment, the balancing act, the failure, the separation—I think they have to go through it individually and sometimes I feel like, if nothing else, I'm a shoulder for them to cry on, for us to talk about it so I can help them deal with it in their own way. It's a growth thing.

MN: When there are disappointments, I try to give the bigger vision. We're trying to build power for all janitors. This is not just going to end. It just ends at this site.

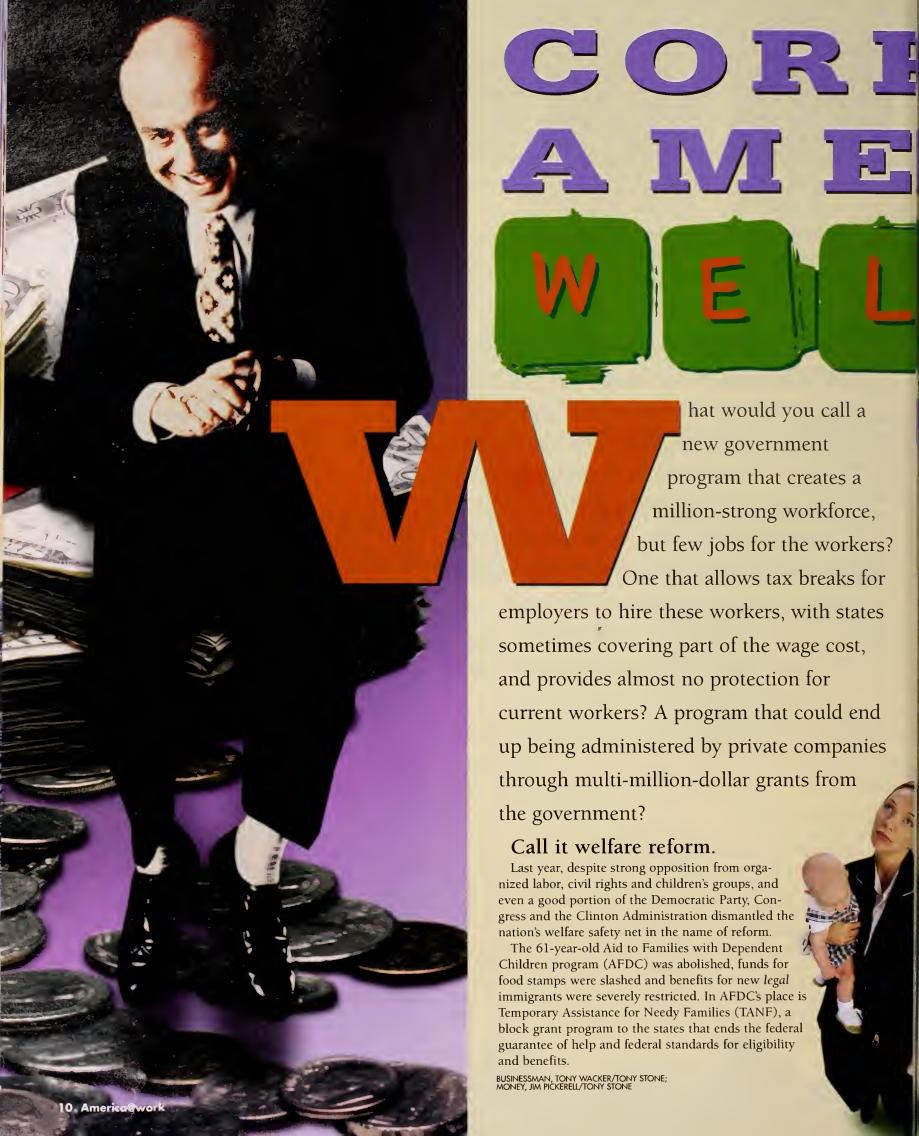
– Muriel H. Cooper

Comments have been edited for length and clarity.

"We are looking for people who are committed to social justice. They know when to take on a fight. They could be in a grocery store that's organized or not organized. They could be on a college campus. They could be rank-and-filers who ran for office and never won, or someone who has been in office for 10 terms. They can be anywhere."

— Moe Fitzsimons





BA

welfare services

What will be the fallout for current workers and workfarers alike?

MIKE HALL

The AFL-CIO and other progressive groups agreed that welfare as we knew it was not working, but favored changes aimed at providing real help for poor families struggling to become or remain

independent—job training, jobs and the supports, such as child care, health care coverage and transportation, that enable people to make the tough transition from welfare to work.

Unlike previous federal welfare law, the current law contains very few protections for workers on the job today—no provisions against employers reducing hours to create openings for subsidized employees, or breaking strikes with workfarers, or even creating parallel production facilities to take advantage of low-wage workfare workers. On top of that, the new law outlines only a weak and vague grievance procedure for any worker who is displaced.

Neither did the law itself require decent treatment of workfare workers, most of whom will be performing subsidized private-sector work or placed in public-service jobs. In May, the Clinton Administration ruled that workfarers are entitled to the same basic protections as other workers, including the minimum wage and civil rights. The ruling was attacked quickly by congressional Republicans.

Without providing new job training funds or creating jobs, the law requires each state to have 25 percent of its welfare recipients working 20 hours a week by the end of this year, and, by 2002, half must be working 30 hours a week. Many in the American business community and some local and state governments welcome this pool of cheap labor. By creating competition for low-wage, low-skill jobs, the welfare law has given employers a hammer to hold over the heads of the 38 million working poor people in this country.

If the current welfare law is allowed to stand—and there are few champions of sweeping improvements on Capitol Hill-there will be real winners and losers. The big winners are corporate America's bottom-feeders—the segment of business that is dedicated to creating a pliant, low-wage workforce-and the companies that stand to make billions from running privatized welfare programs.



TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION

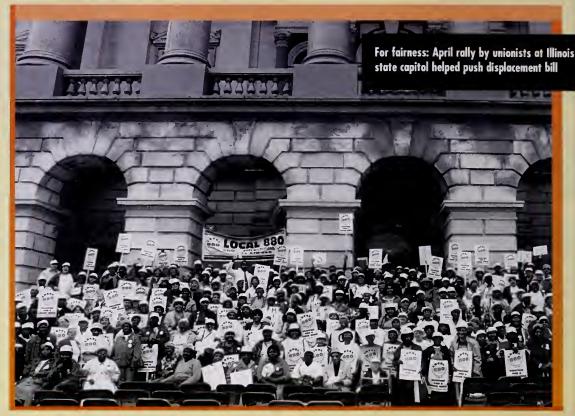
Those who stand to lose the most are workers—the millions of "workfare" workers who are easy to exploit and whose workplace protections are in question, as well as current workers whose jobs may be threatened directly and indirectly.

A \$30 Billion Gold Mine for Big Business

"Corporate America is rushing into the poverty business...The potential U.S. market: more than \$30 billion a year," *Business Week* magazine said in a May 19 article.

Businesses may profit from welfare reform by collecting tax breaks for hiring workfarers and bonuses for moving people off the welfare rolls. Another slice of the welfare pie some businesses have been hoping for is contracts to run social service programs now administered by states and localities.

Late this spring, the Clinton Administration stifled some of big business' hopes, at least temporarily, by denying a Texas scheme that would



SEIU LOCAL 880 PHOTO

FIGHTING BACK

Reform usually means to improve something—to make it better, more efficient. Welfare "reform" is a misnomer, because it does none of that. Here's what it *does* do:

- Professes a goal of moving people from welfare to work, but provides no new job training funds and creates no jobs.
- Cuts \$55 billion over six years from low-income programs—almost half from food stamps.
- Requires work after a maximum of two years, but states can require work sooner, even from mothers of children as young as six years old.
- Sets a five-year lifetime limit on benefits with few exceptions. But again, states can set lower limits. Even welfare recipients with no skills, no high school diplomas and no training can be forced off the rolls.
- Replaces the federal guarantee of help and standards for eligibility and benefits with a block grant to the states. States can choose how to use the funds; if the money runs out mid-year, tough luck for folks who would have qualified under the old law.
- May exclude 300,000 disabled children from Supplemental Security Income (unless Congress acts to derail this aspect of the law), many of whom also will lose Medicaid health coverage.
- Cuts off new *legal* immigrants—who work hard, pay taxes and play by the rules—from SSI, Medicaid, food stamps and welfare.
 But labor is fighting back. On the national

level, labor helped make the case that the Fair Labor Standards Act and other labor laws should apply to workfare workers, and that brakes should be put on Texas' head-long rush to privatization. Because the main welfare battles now are taking place at the state level, union activists, through state federations and central labor councils, are building strong coalitions to prompt state legislatures and governors to do the right thing as they design their welfare programs.

The Texas State Employees Union, a Communications Workers affiliate, led a coalition of unions, disability groups, family organizations and civil rights and religious groups that lobbied the state legislature to pass new rules making it more difficult to privatize welfare services.

The new rules, which were signed by Gov. George Bush Jr., who had developed the plan that Clinton Administration overruled, require public hearings, a cost-benefit analysis that shows not just cost savings but improved services, legislative approval and creation of a legislative oversight committee to monitor privatization efforts.

"We were able to highlight some of the real dangers of privatization and succeeded in derailing the privatization movement," said Rick Levy, legal director of the Texas AFL-

States have great opportunities to turn welfare repeal into meaningful reform. The money to do more than the bare minimum

required by the federal law is available to the states, because TANF funds are based on 1994 caseloads, which were much higher than most states face today.

Labor's agenda in the states includes improvements that would benefit workers leaving welfare and those struggling to stay off welfare, as well. In implementing the welfare law, states should:

- Help people move from welfare to work, or to better jobs, by providing adequate job training.
- Create jobs that pay decent wages, in the private and public sectors.
- Support basic services, such as day care, transportation assistance and health care coverage, that enable welfare recipients and lowwage workers to find and hold jobs.
- Ensure that workers leaving welfare have the same rights as other workers.
- Ensure that no current workers are displaced.

Ellen Golombek, Colorado AFL-CIO COPE director, says labor was able to convince that state's legislature to include worker displacement language and labor protections in its welfare legislation. The state Labor and Human Services departments are meeting with labor leaders this month to discuss grievance procedures. And in Maine, unions led a coalition of concerned groups to push the state's House and Senate to okay in June displacement legislation that also sets up grievance procedures and includes a ban on

have given private companies the job of determining who is eligible to receive food stamps and Medicaid. A labor-led coalition in Texas also scored a victory by convincing the state legislature to clamp down on privatizing efforts (see Fighting Back, page 12.) But like the worker protection ruling, the administration's thumbs-down on the Texas plan is being challenged in Congress. The House budget bill would allow states to contract with private companies to administer food stamps and Medicaid, including determining eligibility.

Even if congressional Republicans fail in this attempt and companies are kept from determining who gets food stamps or Medicaid, the new welfare law makes clear that they *can* win contracts to administer other welfare programs—work currently done by public-sector workers. But the track records of some of the interested companies, according to press and other accounts, leave something to be desired.

A recent Service Employees report shows that some of the defense contractors and other firms drooling over a possible \$2 billion-plus contract to run the Lone Star State's welfare system have fumbled on similar privatization efforts. Lockheed Martin, for example, won a \$99 million bid to automate California's child support system, but that turned into at least a \$260 million project—a 163 percent cost overrun picked up by taxpayers.

During the Texas state Senate debate on privatization in May, reported the *Houston Chronicle*, Sens. Mike Moncrief and Gonzalo Barrientos told

forcing workfare workers into labor disputes.

"We felt it was a good idea to have guidelines to prevent employers from using one set of workers against another," says Paperworkers organizer Jay Democrat.

"Nearly everybody in our area is going to be affected" by welfare reform, says Rina Saperstein, special projects coordinator for the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council. "We feel that labor speaks for working people, whether they're welfare recipients or workers already on the job. We have a responsibility for helping both."

The CLC held a workshop in May to brief union activists about the new welfare program, and to promote advocacy and political action on behalf of all workers. The goal was to inspire members to talk to family, friends and neighbors about how their own jobs may be affected, and to write and phone state representatives.

In Illinois, SEIU Local 880 was able to combine its Campaign for A Living Wage for home care workers with welfare reform efforts. Head organizer Keith Kelleher says a massive April rally at the state capitol in Springfield helped push a displacement bill backed by SEIU, AFSCME and the state AFL-CIO through the legislature. It was signed into law in June.

In Massachusetts, the state AFL-CIO, the North Shore Central Labor Council and several AFSCME, SEIU and UAW locals have joined other progressive community, civil rights and religious groups to form Working Massachusetts. The coalition's goal is to ensure that welfare reform "protects the rights of all workers, offers opportunities for education and training, and protects children while strengthening families and communities.

The coalition is built on the shared understanding that poverty and public assistance are the result of the economy, and should be the concern of all workers, whether or not they are currently employed."

As a union leader, what can you do in the welfare fight?

First, educate your membership about the impact of welfare reform, including increased competition for low-wage work, the possibility that workfarers will be denied some basic worker protections and the cuts in food stamps that are an attack on working people—many of whom qualify for food stamps. Discourage the "us vs. them" response to welfare-to-work programs. Be sure that members recognize that such divisiveness between workers weakens us all—and helps our foes.

Encourage members to get involved in shaping state welfare plans and policies. Give them opportunities to communicate with friendly legislators about implementation that helps rather than harms current and transitioning workers. Remind lawmakers that dis-

their colleagues that Unisys, another company vying for the state contract, had been fined \$4 million in Florida for slow performance and high error rates in the state's employee health insurance program. The pair also noted that company employees pleaded guilty to stealing \$20 million in Medicaid funds, the *Chronicle* story said.

If a private company's profits depend on cutting welfare program costs, do benefits get withheld, are inferior services provided, are workers laid off?

"Profit-making companies whose main concern is the bottom line shouldn't decide who gets benefits and who gets into a job search program," Communications Workers President Morton Bahr said in May.

In Milwaukee, Maximus Inc., along with some nonprofit groups, will administer all that city's welfare programs beginning in September. Maximus will earn 10 percent of the difference between what the state esti-









placement of current workers is no substitute for job creation. Educate your representatives about how essential such services as transportation, child care and health insurance are to reaching the goal of putting welfare recipients to work and keeping low-wage workers off welfare.

Go ahead, talk to hostile legislators about welfare. Try to identify swing voters. Remind legislators that low-wage workers and welfare recipients are consumers and citizens, whose income helps drive the economy and who vote.

Write letters to the editor and guest editorials urging responsible state implementation. And get involved with local living-wage and fair-work campaigns.

Need help? Call your state fed for AFL-CIO model legislation, background information and other material. Check in to see if your CLC is among those gearing up their welfare efforts. And for copies of the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department's Labor Confronts Welfare Reform: An AFL-CIO Guide to State Activity, call 202-637-5209.

mated it would spend on benefits and what is actually spent, creating downward pressure on eligibility determinations.

We're All Workers

Although workfarers may get up each morning and head for jobs like the rest of us, there's been heated debate about whether they are, in fact, workers entitled to worker protections.

In May, the Clinton Administration ruled that workfarers are covered by the minimum wage, the Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA and other labor protections. "The new welfare law does not exempt welfare recipients from these laws," the ruling said.

Some governors had claimed that extending the minimum wage and other labor standards to workfarers would drive up their welfare costs.

Many Republican allies in Congress agreed, saying that people leaving welfare for work should be considered "trainees" or "participants," not real workers—more like indentured servants working off their welfare payments before they get real jobs.

But failure to enforce labor laws for workfarers would open "the door to their exploitation and abuses," and invite

"conscious efforts to pit groups of workers against each other," more than two dozen labor, civil rights, religious and poverty groups had said in a letter to President Clinton. "Everyone who works should enjoy the same rights and have the opportunity to join a union. We should not create a subclass of workers," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said at the Federation's April Executive Council meeting.

"Providing these protections to workfare participants is important for a number of reasons," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "It's fairer to existing workers because it removes the incentive to displace employees...and prevents wage depression; it helps motivate those...trying to enter the workforce...; and finally, it's morally the right thing to do."

Using the federal budget bill, last month House Republicans first tried to overturn the Clinton Administration ruling. A coalition that included the AFL-CIO, affiliated unions and civil rights, women's and religious groups denounced the "sneak attack on the minimum wage" in radio and television ads and with grass roots pressure.

The GOP retreated somewhat. While the budget bill passed by the House in late June would not force workfarers to work for less than the equivalent of the minimum wage (based on the cash value of their benefits), it would not provide them the full protection of the Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, civil rights and other workplace protection laws, creating a second-class minimum wage workforce.

Holding Down Wages

Even if workfarers are paid the minimum wage, workfare employers will enjoy bargain-basement labor, current workers still will worry about displacement and downward pressure on wages may be severe. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that introducing 1 million new workers into the low-wage labor market—as states would have to do to meet the law's initial caseload requirements—is likely to reduce current low-wage workers' earnings by about 12 percent.

"Everyone has been raising wages to get people. This will make it possible to hold pay steady," Keith Wine, manager of one of the two dozen Richmond, Va., companies that signed up for a program that put 2,000

From Welfare to Work— The Union Way

"It takes more than just being job-ready with some training" to go from welfare to work, says Gretchen Vaughn. The New Haven

woman knows what she is talking about.

Introduced to welfare as a child after her parents divorced, Vaughn remained on the rolls as a single mother raising her children. Today she is a case manager and employment specialist with the Living Wages Jobs Program of the Painters' America Works Partnership, earning about \$19 an hour plus benefits. "I went from welfare to work and I earn a living wage," she says proudly.

And while she has to think for a minute how long she has been off public assistance (13 years), she has no trouble recalling that she felt "like I was living out a prison term, trapped by the system with so many obstacles in my way." "I went from one \$5-an-hour job to another, never making enough money to come completely off welfare."

Long before welfare caught the public ire, Vaughn knew she had to make some major life changes. "I would often cry while praying. My two youngest children would blame each other for making me cry. I had a fear of failure, but I knew if I didn't get off public assistance that my children would also become victims of the system."

Vaughn enrolled in college to study computer science. But in 1983, "I was walking to school and there were some men working on a house. I got the nerve to walk over to the guys and ask about construction work." Vaughn says she always enjoyed working with her hands and had family members who were in unions.

"I knew I had hit rock bottom and the only way to go was up." She soared. She received training for drywall finishing and a year later was sent to IBPAT Local 186 in New Haven, now affiliated with District Council 11. Vaughn got off welfare and began meeting new personal and professional goals. She worked as a taper, a foreman and a job steward for the local. In 1995 the local and the international promoted her to her present position.

The Living Wages Jobs Program aims to bring in a new generation of construction workers, especially in inner cities, by providing preapprenticeship training, job placement and entrance into unions. At least as important, says Vaughn, is the program's life skills training.

"The life skills training gives people a chance to learn who they are and work on their self-esteem," she says. "I remember when I started, I had to work from not getting up to getting up every day and going to work. You have to set goals, and when you are on welfare, you're not setting goals...."

"Gretchen is a role model," says Warren Gould, director of organizing for District Council 11. "Without her understanding of where people are coming from and her sensitivity, we wouldn't be as successful. She has made a difference," he says.



welfare recipients into the local workforce, said in an April New York

"Without the welfare people...we would have had to raise the wage, not by a lot, maybe 5 percent—but we would have had to pay more," SOS Staffing Services Chairman Richard Rheinhold said in the same article. The company, based in Salt Lake City, places people in \$6- to \$8-anhour temp jobs-factory work, office clerical help, warehouse workthroughout the West. About 7 percent of the 70,000 people the company placed last year came off the welfare rolls.

In New York, which has more than doubled its workfare work force to 34,000 since 1993, workfarers now outnumber regular paid employees three-to-one in the city Parks and Recreation Department. The city claims no one was displaced from a Parks and Recreation job by workfare workers—even though the workfare workers are performing the same tasks as city employees who were laid off because of past budget cuts.

In Baltimore, instead of renewing contracts with firms that supplied janitors earning \$6 an hour, nine schools were able to bring in workfare workers who cost them only \$1.50 an hour (the difference between their monthly benefits and the minimum wage).

The Baltimore example also illustrates the boon to employers known as "grant diversion." While workfarers may earn the equivalent of the minimum wage, under grant diversion that doesn't mean employers will be shelling out \$5.15 an hour. States may divert welfare benefits to employers, only requiring them to kick in the difference between a workfarer's benefit package and the minimum wage. If the welfare benefits work out to \$4.25 an hour, for example, the employer would be required to kick in only 90 cents an hour. Depending on the level of benefits, some employers actually could acquire "free" workers.



SEIU LOCAL 880 PHOTO

(see story, page 12). But the new law itself makes

challenge more difficult. With welfare no longer

federally controlled, each state administers its own TANF program. Instead of concentrating efforts to fix last year's "reform" on the national level, groups concerned about justice for all workers must fight on 50 fronts, in every state.

That's another part of corporate America's good fortune—these threats are hard to fight.

As the massive social experiment known as welfare reform unfolds, some businesses will be responsible corporate citizens, treating current workers fairly while providing real opportunities for welfare recipients to gain work experience and meaningful jobs.

But the companies with bottom-line hearts and profit-driven souls have a windfall: a hard-to-fight law that creates a low-wage workforce for which they don't have to search the globe, a powerful tool for holding current workers' wages down and the potential for huge profits.

What "Welfare Queen

The drive to revamp welfare was fueled, in part, by misconceptions and ugly stereotypes about welfare recipients. Remember Ronald Reagan's imaginary "welfare queen"? Take a look at who really was receiving welfare help under the dismantled Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

The average AFDC recipient was a 71/2-year-old child. Of the 13.8 million recipients, 9.5 million were children, according to 1995 federal data, the latest available. An average family on welfare consisted of a single mother and two children, who received \$4,532 a year from AFDC and about \$2,500 in food stamps. That left them more than \$4,000 short of the poverty line.

Forget about the myth that single mothers had more children just to get larger welfare payments. AFDC provided a family with three children just \$2.78 a day more than a family with two children.

Of the 4.3 million adults who received benefits in 1995, 3.8 million (88 percent) were women. About 9 percent of them had jobs and 70 percent had recent work experience. Low wages (40 percent of single mothers working full time earn wages below poverty), divorce and the need to escape domestic violence were among the factors that pushed these women onto welfare rolls.

Forty-two percent of families on welfare received benefits for less than two years, but a significant proportion of families need help for five years or more. Families tend to go on and off welfare and move in and out of the labor force as they struggle to overcome barriers to work, including:

• Transportation problems: Although reliable transportation is a must for getting and keeping a job, welfare eligibility limited the

value of a recipient's car to \$1,500. The average vehicle owned by a family on welfare was valued at \$699, according to the federal Department of Health and Human Services. For most welfare families, however, a car remains unaffordable—a real obstacle, particularly for would-be workers in rural areas and towns without public transportation.

- Child care costs: Eighty-five percent of welfare families had children under 12. But day care for one child can consume \$4,000 a year—an impossible chunk of a low-wage worker's earnings.
- Lack of education: Forty-two percent of AFDC recipients lacked high school diplomas or their equivalent, and a similar portion had no education beyond high school. Lack of education often limits welfare recipients to dead-end, low-wage, unstable jobs with few or no benefits.
- Lack of phones: Roughly one-third of families receiving AFDC in 1987 did not have telephones, severely limiting their job-hunting ability.

Welfare "reform" was prompted further by a 25 percent increase in the number of welfare recipients during the recessionary years of the Bush Administration. Improvements in the economy from January 1993 to January 1996 helped trim the welfare rolls by 20 percent, as an unprecedented 2.75 million people went off welfare.

As for the taxpayers, in 1993 we paid out \$23 billion for AFDC and emergency assistance to needy families. Compare that to the \$133 billion The Economist estimates taxpayers shelled out for direct federal subsidies to corporate America, and you have to ask why "welfare as we know it" ended only for the poor.

AGINATES B. PARKS

s corporations consolidate and expand globally, many unions have

"For me it's all about power—the financial and political power to represent our members."



decided that merging resources and power is the best way to deal with the emerging mega-corporations.

Bigger, they say, is becoming better for unions.

"The bigger you are, the more
effectively you can deal with these
multinationals," says Dave Barry,
executive vice president of the
Food and Commercial Workers. "It
levels the battleground."

In the last five years alone, there have been 18 mergers among affiliated unions, involving more than 5 million members, up from 10 mergers in the previous five-year period. Just within the last two years:

- Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the Ladies' Garment Workers merged into a new needle-trades union, UNITE;
- The Rubber Workers and the Aluminum, Brick, and Glass Workers joined with the Steelworkers;

Unified: George Becker of USWA, George Kourpias of IAM and Stephen Yokich of

UAW at unification plan

signing in 1995

• Three unions—the Distillery Workers, the

RAYMOND CROWELL/PAGE ONE PHOTOGRAPHY



United Textile Workers and the Chemical Workers—merged with UFCW;

- The Firemen and Oilers, the Leather Goods Makers and the Committee of Interns and Residents merged with the Service Employees;
 - The Newspaper Guild merged with CWA.
- The Metal Polishers joined with the Boilermakers; and
- The Mechanics Educational Society joined with the Machinists.

Another merger, affecting 1.6 million members—the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union with UFCW—becomes effective in October. Two years ago, the presidents of the UAW, the Steelworkers and the Machinists announced that their unions had agreed to a "unification" within five years to form the largest affiliate in history, with nearly 2 million members. And at the winter AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Los Angeles, presidents Doug Dority of UFCW and Morton Bahr of CWA announced that they are exploring the possibility of merger, while talks continue between AFT and the unaffiliated National Education Association.

Still more mergers may be in the works. Only 22 of the 78 affiliated unions have 100,000 or more members, according to the 1995 Executive Council Report to the Convention. Many other unions may be too small to counter the power of the large employers they deal with. "Each union has to decide for itself what its needs are," Barry says. "If they find that they're not growing" and it's getting difficult to gain at the bargaining table, then merger might be a good option, he says.

The constitution of the AFL-CIO, itself the product of a 1955 merger, encourages mergers, calling on unions to "eliminate conflicts and duplications through the process of agreement, merger or other means."

From the beginning days of the Federation, mergers generally have been one-sided, with larger unions absorbing smaller ones struggling to survive. But new trends are developing. Unions with substantial memberships of their own are beginning to join with larger unions with which they share common interests. For example, RWDSU brings 85,000 members to its affiliation with the more than

the anti-union South, while the Ladies' Garment Workers had more resources and mainly had organized northeastern factories producing women's apparel.

"The merger has been a success," says Jay Mazur, UNITE's president. "We complement each other. We have committed \$10 million to expand our organizing efforts and are going to organize in a new sense of the word." For example, sweatshops, which abused women, children and immigrant workers, tended to be an ILGWU issue. The merger allowed the union to expand beyond women's apparel and look at what sweatshops do to the apparel industry overall.

Organizing and collective bargaining, in fact, are the big winners in mergers. In the midst of a long-running, vicious strike against Bridgestone/Firestone, the nation's leading tire manufacturer, the Rubber Workers bolstered its collective bargaining muscle by joining forces with the more than 400,000 Steelworkers, whose resources and experience at large national strikes helped bring an end to the dispute.

The Steelworkers' mergers with the Rubber Workers and the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers allowed the union to "consolidate bargaining efficiency and influence at the bargaining table," says Richard Davis, USWA vice

"If you ask people to create something new and to buy into it, you have to have their input."

IAM PRESIDENT R. THOMAS BUFFENBARGER

1 million members of UFCW.

"In many respects we deal with the same employers and companies in the same industries. We've seen companies consolidating and it's better if we deal from the same kind of strength," says RWDSU President Lenore Miller.

For large unions, mergers certainly increase membership. UFCW has gained over 70,000 new members through four mergers in the last five years. USWA has gained 116,000 members through two mergers over the same period, and SEIU has grown by 40,000.

But mergers also are being made for more strategic purposes, often bringing together unions with complementary characteristics. The creation of UNITE in 1995 joined two unions, each with about 130,000 members. ACTWU, which began in the men's clothing industry, had been successful in organizing in

president. "We share an awful lot of common bargaining partners. The mergers systematically enhanced our ability to deal with the same companies, Alcoa and Reynolds Aluminum with the URW, and the chemical industry with ABGW."

The mergers also "provided the opportunity to target for organizing pieces of industry where we share bargaining rights. That was clearly the situation with the URW and the tire sector," Davis says. "It allows you to reach out to unorganized workers and tell them that you have the size, experience, makeup and wherewithal to be their union."

The members of UFCW gained new and valuable member services when the International Chemical Workers Union brought, its health and safety program to the 1996 merger. Now, Barry says, the combined union has

UFCW's resources and the Chemical Workers' expertise in dealing with issues such as hazardous materials and related health problems.

Despite advantages, mergers are not easy to negotiate or consummate. A merger is like a marriage, Barry says. "You gotta be in love." The unions coming together have different constitutions, legacies and traditions.

"You're putting together two different cultures. Whenever you do that, you have to look at the different parts of each culture," says Pat Thomas, SEIU's member organizing campaign director. For the marriage to be successful, the needs of everyone in the group must be assessed and addressed, according to James Norton, president of the Graphic Communications International Union.

The AFT's negotiations with NEA over a possible merger demonstrate the difficulty of the process. After holding talks for most of this decade, the sides have not reached agreement. "The issues we are talking about are extremely complex," AFT President Sandra Feldman says. But she and NEA President Bob Chase say that talks continue to move ahead.

The USWA-UAW-Machinists unification process reveals the complexity involved in a merger. The three unions represent workers in 14 different industries and professions, including the huge automobile, aerospace, metals and transportation industries. The unions set up committees to study every aspect of the unification, including a constitution committee, which is going through the three constitutions, using computers to match related articles before crafting a new document for a new union.

Davis cautions that "land mines" are elements of any merger, but "if the goal is to provide improved services and organizing for their members, then those [land mines] become much more solvable."

The biggest roadblocks to mergers, Thomas says, are turf, finances and personal comfort levels.

Finances can be a deal-breaker, she says. Many smaller unions have lower dues than the larger unions they're seeking to join and they often carry heavy debt loads, as well. For the merger to be consummated, Thomas advises that both sides work out a financial plan that the leaders can sell to members but that will bring the new locals up to par. Usually this means gradually increasing the new locals' dues over time; in SEIU's case, it took four years for new locals' dues to catch up. In Thomas' experience, after about two years members feel more comfortable with each other, and the new members are more likely to approve a dues increase.

GCIU President James Norton



Working together: UFCW President Doug Dority, at podium, and RWDSU President Lenore Miller cheer Frontier strikers

Norton also underscores the need to integrate as many of the independent union funds—pensions and health and welfare—as soon as possible, to provide a common level of benefits to the members of the merged union.

Turf issues often can be tougher to work through, Thomas says. "You're dealing with egos of a lot of individual leaders. They're big fish, and all of a sudden, they're in a larger organization."

"If the debate revolves around how the merger affects the leadership, then you need to sit back and take a good look at it," Davis says. "You need leadership willing to make the decision that this is good for the membership and that's the important thing."

Over the years, SEIU has dealt with turf sensitivity by including leaders of smaller unions on boards and committees, and heads of larger unions on the Executive

Board, "so they feel a part of the organization and don't resent a loss of power,"
Thomas says.
Davis, whose union, District 50, joined with USWA in 1973, says

every merged union acquires a seat on the Steelworkers' Executive Board. The result has been a full integration of new cultures and diverse insights into the union, he says.

The size of the unions involved in the merger may affect how smoothly the integration takes place, Norton says. "If you have a smaller entity merging into a larger entity with some provisions for representation on the various boards, there's less turmoil in the smaller entity, and I would suspect the problems would be less in terms of contention. With equal-size partners, there is competition to make one of the two unions the successor; that has to be managed so that doesn't happen."

GCIU is the product of the 1983 merger of two printing industry unions, the Graphic Arts Union and the International Printing and Graphic Communications Union, both of which had merged with other unions over the previous 33 years.

The merger document gave each union equal representation on the Executive Board, initially, making for a 20-member board that was to be pared to 10 within 10 years. The 1992 convention trimmed the board to eight, effective in 1996.

"You have to recognize that job security for people has to be a prime consideration," Norton says.

Likewise, job security applied to the office staffs, because the GCIU relied on attrition to pare down its staff size.

Successful mergers involve a complete integration, top to bottom, Norton says. About 65 percent of the local unions that form GCIU have

MARIANNE KEIFFER ZWEIG/PAGE ONE PHOTOGRAPHY

merged since 1983, and those continue to happen. "Local merger has to be on a voluntary basis to ensure success at that level," he says. "If it were mandatory, we would be putting up walls and obstacles. Making it voluntary was one of the brightest things we ever did."

Ultimately, the success of any merger attempt hangs on the level of comfort the members of the two unions feel with each other, and how well the merger negotiators are able to avoid the loss of the pride the members may feel for their existing unions.

"I believe the biggest thing is that we probably underestimated the degree of pride each union's members had in their union," Norton says. "Pride is a good attribute, but it required more time for conflicting notions to be merged together. I don't know that you could ever have legislated that. But once those involved recognized that others had the same idea that they did—to have the best union in the printing industry—then it worked.

"I think that it takes at least five years for [the conflicts] to become totally manageable. Within 10 years, however, it's hard to recognize the heritage of any member or employee. Then they're all GCIU."

Often larger unions create new internal councils that correspond with the interests of the newly added smaller unions. For example,

"We are already unified because we have found out we can work together."

UAW PRESIDENT STEPHEN P. YOKICH

RWDSU is becoming the RWDS Council of UFCW, and the Rubber Workers became the Rubber/Plastics Industry Conference of USWA. These arrangements allow the new union members to retain their identity yet still be fully integrated into the new union. It also helps the union focus its energies in a new arena.

The unions' leadership must sell the merger, Thomas says, and that support must reflect the wishes of members. "You find out fairly soon" if the members are not in favor of a merger. Thomas recommends that unions considering a merger create committees made up of rank-and-file members as well as leaders to oversee the merger. "That way you're looking at this from a lot of different angles," Thomas says. This approach also allows for gauging the sentiment

throughout the union for the merger.

As a second step, Thomas recommends including members of both unions in conferences and training sessions. This approach promotes word-of-mouth assurance among the rank and file that the merged union is one in which both sides can feel comfortable.

In the end it boils down to trust and respect for each side's legacy and traditions, Barry said.

So what's the bottom line? Are mergers hard to accomplish? Oh, yes. Can they be worth the effort? Absolutely, Davis says. "It is a very positive thing to do. Clearly the concerns and fears at changing the face and soul of a labor union disappear when you see that the product achieves the goals that these trade unionists could not achieve standing alone."

IN AUSTRALIA, CONSOLIDATION FOR SURVIVAL

Australian unions have had a great motivation for merging over the past 17 years: survival.

In less than two decades, mergers have reduced the total number of Australian unions by two-thirds. As recently as 1981, 316 Australian unions represented about 2.7 million workers. Eighty percent had fewer than 50,000 members. But the recession in the early 1980s brought double-digit unemployment and a continuing loss of union membership—just as it did in the United States. Australian unions were able to organize only seven of every 100 new workers added to the labor force, and from 1982 to 1994, the unionized percentage of the workforce fell from 50 percent to 35 percent, according to author Gary N. Chaison in Union Mergers in Hard Times: A View from Five Countries.

In the early 1980s, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the country's counterpart of the AFL-CIO, determined that amalgamation was necessary for unions to survive. The council drew up a blueprint that foresaw the creation of 18 large industry-based unions and detailed which unions

should merge to create those new entities, Chaison says.

In 1988, the ruling Labour Party, supported by the ACTU, set forth a new national policy on reforming union structure and attempting to raise the minimum size for unions registering with the federal tribunal. Concurrently, ACTU encouraged its members to merge. In a 1987 report ACTU issued jointly with the Trade Development Council, the federation called for "strategic unionism." It said unions should be moving "from being reactive to events, to becoming proactive, taking initiatives and setting the agenda." Through mergers, "substantially more resources become available to increase the range and quality of services provided to members. Specifically, more research, education and organization resources are freed and duplication is avoided."

ACTU created a new tri-level status for unions—a move that prompted even more mergers, Chaison says. It designated the categories of "principal unions," "significant unions" and "other unions." The federal gov-

ernment helped fund merger campaigns, aiding the smaller unions that wanted to avoid being relegated to "other unions" status.

Although the trade union systems in the United States and Australia are very different-Australian unions must register to represent workers before state and federal tribunals, which historically have set wages and working conditions—the consolidation effort offers good lessons. Some of the Australian mergers were in name only, with merging unions retaining their individual autonomy, staffs, programs, councils and conventions. Where this occurred, services were duplicated and doors to factionalism were opened. Mergers that involved the top level but not the shop level prevented economies of scale that could have redirected savings to organizing, education and research.

But where unions amalgamated and over time worked to become fully merged from the national to local level, they were able to provide their members better services more efficiently and at lower cost.



t wasn't Dennis Rodman, exactly. But on the streets of New York City and Miami, "brides" in full dress staged mock weddings May 2 to kick off UNITE's international campaign against bridal-wear designer Alfred Angelo's use of child labor in Latin American sweatshops.

Copies of Lifting the Veil at Alfred Angelo were handed out as wedding gifts. The paper details sweatshop conditions and extensive use of child labor at three Guatemalan factories that manufacture Angelo gowns. The gowns are produced under Christian Dior and Michele Piccione Couture labels and sold through J.C. Penney bridal catalogs and retail stores.

The company plans to shift all production to Guatemala, putting 270 workers in Philadelphia and New York on the streets—sans wedding gowns.

Sign On for Avondale

t's been four long years since a strong majority at Avondale ship-yard, near Metairie, La., voted for union representation, and management has used every trick in the book to keep the union outside its gates.

To broaden support for the drive for justice on the job, the New Orleans Metal Trades Department, which in April was certified by the National Labor Relations Board as the employees' bargaining representative, has launched a petition drive. The petition flyer charts the history of the frustrating battle, from the 1985 employee stock ownership plan using \$92 million in workers' pension assets, to CEO Al Bossier's "impermissible intimidation" (to quote a district court judge) in seizing control of the company, through continuing job site fatalities, to the NLRB's declaration of a union victory.

Management still, refuses to bargain with its workers' union, preferring to use high-priced taxpayer-supported attorneys to continue the legal battle. If you want to add your name to those calling for a fair contract, write Campaign for Justice at Avondale, c/o New Orleans MTD,

3515 No. I-10 Service Rd., Metairie, La. 70002.

A Night at the Movies

an't get your members interested in political activity? Take them to the movies. That's what the Cincinnati chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute did.

The group of African-American trade unionists presented for 250 community and labor activists a special showing of Spike Lee's movie "Get on the Bus" at a local theater. Tickets were distributed through local unions, community groups, congregations and social organizations

As movie-goers entered the theater, they were able to pick up voter registration materials and learn about the work of APRI and other groups. A discussion of political participation followed the movie.

Wired Up and Fired Up

he Communications

ANTI-WORKED MICH

Rally 'round: Supporters of Avon

workers rally in New York during

shareholders' meeting

Workers' electronic activism day May 12 gave members a jolt to get involved.

CWA members visited the union's website (www.cwa-union.org) to send electronic messages to Disney CEO Michael Eisner about union-busting tactics at the ABC network and labor abuses abroad.

ABC is trying to hire temporary workers to replace as many as 2,700 full-time employees, all members of NABET/CWA.

Making a Point DRAMATICALLY!

Tant to get your message across in dramatic fashion? Six unions in New York City support The Working Theatre, a theater company that produces labor-oriented plays. It operates out of the Judith Anderson Theatre, presenting plays about the concerns of working people.

"We are dedicated to producing new culturally diverse plays that explore the lives of working people and the issues they confront n a world of changing values,"

says Jennifer Cook, development director for the theater.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Arcaro, the theater just closed out "A Drop in the Bucket," a dark comedy about the adventures of two widowed retirees. In addition, the theater hosts workshops to expose writers to the ongoing issues that union leaders and working folks face.

The theater receives support from locals of OPEIU, AFSCME, SEIU, AFT, CWA and the Technical Employees. It will be producing "To Mandela" for its winter season. For more information, call 212-967-5464.



The union also is encouraging members to send e-mail urging Congress to close a major tax loophole that would allow Disney to avoid paying \$600 million in capital gains taxes.

Meanwhile, thousands of

Minnie march: Unionists march in New York City to defend jobs at ABC

union members and supporters from the New York City area protested on May 15 outside of the Amsterdam Theater, which Disney is renovating.

Reaching a New Generation

irst it was Union Summer that reached college students. Then Senior Summer for the mature union member. But what about the high-schoolers?

In Arizona, the Carpenters are building the foundation for new memberships by going where the kids are—into high schools across the state—to talk up the benefits of trades professions in general and unions in particular.

"There's nothing in the curriculum that teaches them anything about the unions or what they do or their purpose in society," says Rick Mills, secretarytreasurer of UBC's state district council. "They know that in order to be an attorney, they have to go to law school, and to be a doctor, they have to go to medical school. But they didn't realize to be a craftsperson, you have to have training through an apprenticeship or trade program."

Now they do.

My Beautiful Balloons raduation day is a time to celebrate, but Education

raduation day is a time to celebrate, but at May 15 ceremonies, New York University's 1,600 clerical and technical workers didn't have much to cheer.

"We didn't want to disrupt graduation or take away from the students," says Lisa Baum, an officer of NYSUT-AFT Local 3822. But the unionists, who had been working without a contract for seven months because the school refuses to bargain, couldn't pass up a chance to make their case before thousands of students, parents and university brass.

About 200 members handed out and released festive balloons in the school's colors—yellow and purple—that carried a

simple message: "Education without Exploitation." They also passed out flyers congratulating the grads and urging them to speak up for justice.

"We're glad we could be part of your experience here. Maybe one of us assisted you in processing financial aid. Or helped you find research data for a paper...or add a class...or get housing," the flyers said. "Call NYU President L. Jay Oliva at 212-998-2345. Tell him it's time to negotiate."



without

Exploitation



Shopicilis

n 1995, 6,210 workers died on the job due to traumatic accidents, an estimated 50,000 workers died from occupational diseases and more than 6.6 million injuries and illnesses were reported in private-sector workplaces, according to *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, the AFL-CIO's sixth annual report on safety and health protections for American workers. Yet there are efforts in Congress to tie the hands and freeze the funds of the nation's job safety watchdog, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

OSHA's "resources (staffing and funding) remain inadequate to meet the challenge of ensuring safe workplace conditions for American workers," says the report. "It would take federal OSHA 167 years to inspect each workplace under its jurisdiction, just once."

The report's bottom line? "Workers need more job safety and health protections, not less."

Death on the Job reports that transportation incidents were the leading cause of workplace deaths in 1995, with 2,560 fatalities. Violence was the second leading cause of on-the-job deaths, claiming the lives of 1,262 workers (see May–June Shoptalk).

The Clinton Administration has asked for a \$22.9 million budget increase for OSHA, but this modest boost has drawn fire. Rep. William

Goodling (R-Pa.), chairman of the Education and Economic Opportunities Committee, has urged a freeze on OSHA's funding for FY 1998. Meanwhile, Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) is taking aim at enforcement with S. 765, the Safety and Health Advancement Act, which would shift OSHA's focus from strong enforcement to voluntary compliance. The bill would hamper OSHA's ability to set standards for emerging

DEAD Y JOHNS ADMINISTRATION OF CHICAGO AND CHICAGO AND

hazards and authorize citations against workers, but not employers, who violate OSHA standards.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to begin work on the Labor-HHS-Education bill this month and Senate hearings on the Enzi bill are expected later this summer.

Death on the Job also noted significant drops in repetitive stress injuries (RSIs) in industries in which OSHA has implemented ergonomics con-

trol measures—auto making, meatpacking, apparel and poultry.

But the House Workforce Protections subcommittee held a May hearing with hand-picked witnesses who contended there was no link between RSIs and workplace conditions. Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-Texas), a leading opponent of OSHA's drive to set ergonomic standards, said he would attempt to add a rider to the FY 1998 funding bill for the

Labor, Health and Human Services and Education departments to bar OSHA from issuing ergonomics standards until another time-consuming review is completed.

For Death on the Job (\$6), an Ergo Action Kit on RSIs (\$5) or the Enzi "Safety and Health Advancement Act" fact sheet, contact the AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone 202-637-5366; fax 202-508-6978 or e-mail 71363.1544@compuserve.com. To help on the legislative front, ask local union members to call their lawmakers at 1-800-Labor21. They should urge their senators to defeat the Enzi OSHA bill and their representatives in the House to oppose provisions in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill that would bar OSHA from issuing ergonomics standards and would freeze the safety agency's funds.



Q. I am looking to organize a grass roots movement here in Oregon to change the laws governing the plight of injured workers. Who can help?

A. Contact Brad Witt at the Oregon AFL-CIO, who has been coordinating labor's efforts to salvage what is left of Oregon's workers' compensation law. A number of injured

workers' groups around the country have been sharing information and ideas. Assisted by the Pennsylvania and national AFL-CIO, Tim Wagner, executive director of the Pennsylvania Federation of Injured Workers (717-238-9351), and Bill Temmink of the Louisiana Injured Workers Union (504-945-

4500) pulled the groups together for a first meeting last August. The AFL-CIO has a Resource Manual on Workers' Compensation and an occasional newsletter, Workers' Compensation Notes. For more information, contact the AFL-CIO Occpational Safety and Health Department at 202-637-5367.

Q. Union members have been talking about "employee involvement committees" set up by their employers. Are these legal?

A. It depends. These committees may qualify as "labor organizations," which employers are prohibited from "dominating." Legally, a line is drawn

between two types of committees. Employers may establish committees to address productivity, quality control or other management concerns. However, employee committees that deal with the employer over terms and conditions of employment, such as wages or benefit plans, are likely to be found illegal, especially if the employer selects members,

sets meeting times or otherwise controls the group. Employee involvement committees are particularly suspect when created in the midst of an organizing drive. The "TEAM Act," which Congress is considering, would make it easier for employers to set up employer-dominated committees. For more information on the bill, contact the AFL-CIO Legislation Department at 202-637-5057.

Q. My representatives in the state legislature are attacking working families through legislation. I can't vote them out until next year. What should I do now? A. First, contact your local union's political education and legislative action committees. Volunteer for activities—from leafleting to aiding in fundraising and political awareness activities.

Both legislative and political activities must be carried out year-round, every year. Strongly consider joining your local union's core group of activists.

Home http://home.AFLCIO t's New? What's Cool?

U.S.-MADE

iterally from A to Z, Made in the USA: The Complete Guide to America's Finest Products gives a thorough rundown of American-made products. For the first time, the book also identifies union-made products.

The book notes that if America's trade deficit was divided up among the population, it would work out to about \$740 per person a year or \$2 a day. "It may have been caused by buying one Japanese auto a decade...buying Chinese toys and electronic gadgets that may have been produced by political prisoners...or a bottle of imported beer every day."

Published by the Made in the USA Founda-

tion, a coalition of unions, businesses and individuals formed in 1989, the 320-page book carries a GCIU bug. Unions interested in ordering copies of the \$15 book (the foundation will pay shipping and handling for union orders) may call 202-822-6060.



TRAINING TRAINERS

et on the organizing track with the AFL-CIO Education Department's regional train-the-trainer workshops on how to teach the Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing (MEMO) program. MEMO looks at how the economy affects workers' ability to organize, the link between collective bargaining and organizing and why organizing is mandatory for labor's future.

The first session is scheduled during the 1997 Meany Center Western Semester at the Hyatt Islandia Hotel in San Diego, August 3-8. Central labor councils and local unions that have organizing programs are encouraged to sign up early because enrollment is limited. For registration information, call 301-431-5422. CLCs and local and state fed leaders who want more information about how

FEEDBACK, PLEASE

Please send ideas, comments and questions to America@work, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com.

UNION LINE Have Your Own Union Summer

Want to do the right thing when you gear up for summer? Look for the union label on the mowers, garden tools and patio furniture you buy. Here are your best bets for solid(arity) value:

The Steelworkers' products include Samsonite lawn furniture; Sunbeam wrought iron patio furniture; lawn mowers by Snapper, MTD; Gilmour garden hoses; Green Garden hose nozzles and sprinkler systems; Brown Jordan patio furniture; and Ames yard and garden tools.

UAW members make lawn mowers by Adalet, Scott Fetzer, Murray, Lawn Boy and Jacobsen; pruning shear blades by Wisco Industries; and chipper/shredders by MTD and Craftsman.

The Machinists produce lawn mowers and tractors for John Deere, Toro, Outboard Marine Corp. and Simplicity Manufacturing Inc.; and chipper/shredders, lawn vacuums and mulchers for Simplicity Manufacturing, Inc.

Cub Cadet lawn mowers and tractors are made under a **UFCW** contract and the Electronics Workers

have a contract with Genie for leaf blowers, shop vacs and garage door openers.

For the garden, Boilermakers produce steelforged lawn and garden tools, shovels, scoops, rakes and wheelbarrows under the following labels: Green Thumb, Yard 'N Garden, Trail Blazer, Flex Beam, Jet-Lite, Atlas and Farm King.

MEMO fits into their organizing or mobilization programs should call their regional directors or the AFL-CIO Education Department at 202-637-5142.

ORGANIZING HOW-TO

onstruction Organizing, a revised and expanded third edition by the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades and Education Departments, provides a step-by-step guide to the latest strategies for organizing, winning recognition, contract language and enforcement. The book, which features a foreword by BCTD President Robert Georgine, is available for \$15 each for up to four copies and \$12 each for five or more copies. It is available from Labor's Heritage Press Department, George

Meany Center for Labor Studies, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 20903. The fax number is 301-434-0371.

DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT...

orkers have always had stories to tell. Now we can read them, too, in a compilation of tales

presented by Archie Green, a retired professor of English and folklore at the University of Texas. Calf's Head and Union Tale: Labor Yarns at Work and Play contains 66 stories, many in multiple versions, from the

world at work. Encompassing a wide range of styles, settings, occupations and personalities, including such famed leaders as Mother Jones, A. Philip Randolph and Walter Reuther, the volume provides a source citation and pertinent background data for each tale. The book (\$34.95 cloth, \$13.95 paper) is published by University of Illinois Press.

CEO PAY: UP, UP AND AWAY

here seems to be no end to CEO greed," Communications Workers President Morton Bahr says in a foreword to a new report on executive pay by United for a Fair Economy (UFE) and the Institute for Policy Studies.

The study looks at the top 30 job-cutting CEOs for 1996 and finds the layoff leaders boosted their compensations 67.3 percent far more than the average increase for other execs—and enjoyed a 178-to-1 pay advantage over their lowest-paid workers.

The AFL-CIO has been focusing the spotlight (see the AFL-CIO's Executive Paywatch website: www.paywatch.org) on the outrageous executive pay that's caught the public's attention. A Wall Street Journal/ NBC poll shows that 73 percent of the public believes CEOs in large companies are paid too much. Proving that there is not only a wage gap, but a huge gap in values, the same poll shows 72 percent of the execs believe they're paid just right.

For copies of the report, Executive Excess: CEO's Gain from Massive Downsizing, call UFE at 617-423-2148 or IPS at 202-234-9382.

WE ASKED A WORKING WOMAN

Actually, we asked hundreds of thousands of working women to tell us about their jobs and their lives in the Ask a Working Woman Survey.

September 5–7 at the Ask a

Working Woman Conference

in Washington, D.C., we'll look

COME HEAR WHAT SHE SAID!

at their responses and create an agenda for all working women—to bring change on the job, in our communities and in our national policies.

We'll discuss key issues for today's working women—like equal pay for equal work, good pay for working families, child care that we can afford and trust,

Thealth care and pensions for security today and tomorrow, and much more.



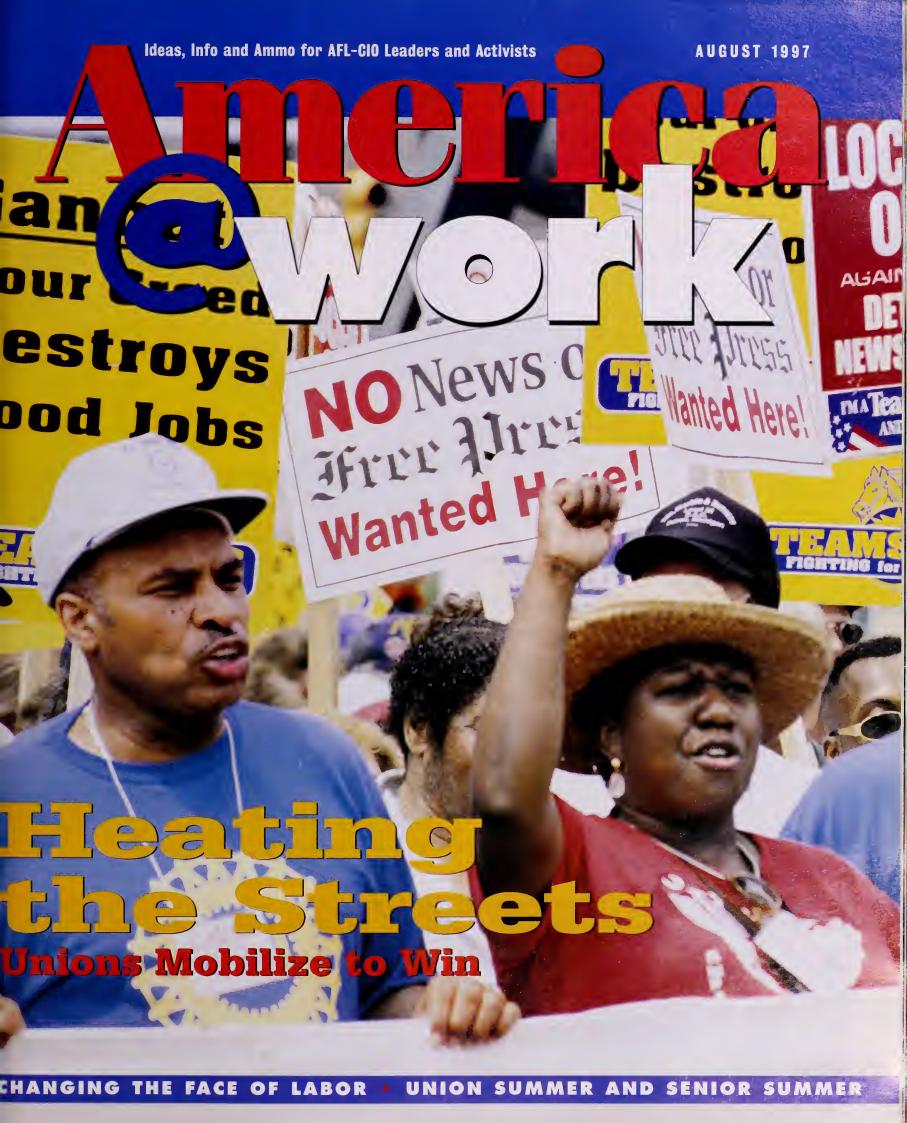




HOLD THE DATE

It's Going To Be Great!
The AFL-CIO biennial convention: September 22–25 in Pittsburgh.

To find out more, call 202-835-8286, fax 202-508-6902, or check our website at www.aflcio.org/women/



Ideas and Views From You

STEAK AND LEFTOVERS

@ Business Week magazine's annual survey of executive pay reveals that total compensation for the average CEO jumped 54 percent last year, to a staggering \$5.8 million. That's 209 times the average for factory employees, according to the magazine's calculations.

The fat cats of the American business world continue to eat steak while the American work force continues to receive the measly leftovers!-Niles Bell, UAW Local 624

'HOW TO GROW AN ORGANIZER'

@ I find this magazine to be most informative, educational and of a high quality, something we in the labor movement have every reason to be proud about. 'How to Grow an Organizer' [July issue] is timely and something all of us can put to good use irrespective of the time we have been in the labor movement, whether a few months or many years. Keep up the good work.

-William H. Sinclair, AFSCME consultant, Panama







What's your point of view? Send a letter, fax or e-mail to: America@work, AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010. Fax: 202-508-6908.

When you see unions@work

and our members@work

and collective power in our communities@work,

E-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com Internet: http://www.aflcio.org

"Don't matter if we're white, Black or purple, just matters that we stick together."

> —Erma Young, striking UPS worker in Willow Springs, Ill., quoted in the New York Times

Say What?

What's the most effective way you've found to recruit members to turn out for mobilizations?

Say What? is a new feature in America@work, designed to begin a lively dialogue among union activists. Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts on this month's Say What? question. We'll publish responses in a future issue.

America@work

815 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com

DEFENDING WORKERS' INTERESTS

@ Congratulations to all of you who put out America@work. It is exactly the kind of publication working people need in today's economy. While the corporations and the wealthy have any number of business publications to help them defend their interests, it's about time workers have a magazine to help them defend their interests. Now they do! -Rep. Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.)

@ The May/June issue of America@work was great. —John P. Graham Jr., education and training coordinator, NNEC/SEIU, Augusta, Maine



August 1997 • Val. 2, Na. 7

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E-mail: 71112.53@campuserve.cam Internet: http://www.aflcia.arg



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CHANGING THE FACE OF LABOR

New strategies for organizing, leadership development and building community alliances are expanding diversity in the labor movement



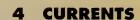
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Big News in Motown

fter nearly two years of struggle and solidarity, the 2,000 locked-out
Detroit newspaper employees may be getting their jobs back. A federal judge heard arguments July 31 on whether to issue an injunction ordering the Detroit Newspaper Agency to return the employees to their jobs and to terminate replacement workers if necessary.

The regional NLRB office filed the motion for an injunction July 7, less than a week after a unanimous board voted to seek an injunction. Calling the board's July 1 decision "another step towards justice," Alfred P. Derey, chair of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, said if the court grants the injunction, "that leaves only one course for all parties—to negotiate a resolution to this dispute."

The NLRB decision followed a two-day show of national support for the workers by 125,000 union members from across the country, who delivered the message to the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* that "It's Not Over!" But the

biggest voice at Action! Motown '97, the June 20–21 show of solidarity for locked-out newspaper workers, belonged to a man who was not there—Thomas R. Wilks. Wilks, an administrative law judge, ruled June 19 that the 19-month newspaper strike was caused by the papers' unfair labor practices, meaning that all the locked-out employees soon could be back at work and the company faces up to \$80 million in backpay costs.

The workers agreed to end the strike in February, but the newspapers maintained they could only provide jobs as openings occurred, leaving some 1,800 employees out in the cold. The papers refused to fire any of the replacement workers they had hired during the strike. However, under federal labor law, permanent replacements cannot be hired during an unfair labor practice strike such as this one.

Wilks determined, among other things, that the *News*' and *Free Press*' unilateral implementation of a discretionary merit pay proposal violated the National Labor Relations Act and was "inherently

destructive" of the collective bargaining process and triggered the strike.

Speaking to a mass rally June 21, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the marchers, "You

have won the battle of Detroit! Now it is up to all the rest of us to pay our debt to you by fighting to the finish and winning the battle outside Detroit."



abitat for Humanity International and labor are teaming up to build two homes for low-income families in Washington, D.C. "It's a perfect partnership," says Arthur Coia, Laborers' president. "We work for the same things: lifting up humanity, enhancing the quality of life, building better lives and building a better world."

The Carpenters, Teamsters, Painters and Sheet Metal Workers are joining LIUNA in this effort. The nonprofit Habitat for Humanity Inc. has built more than, 55,000 homes worldwide.

In Washington, D.C., two families should be able to move into their new homes on Labor Day.

Beverly Breakthrough

y a whopping 90 percent margin, Service Employees members at 19 Beverly nursing homes in Pennsylvania approved a new four-year contract that puts an end to almost two years of strained relations. The new deal was reached June 30 after a flurry of around-the-clock negotiations and the governor's intervention. It was ratified during a four-day voting period.

"When we started this fight in 1995, we said it wasn't about money, it was about the right to have a union at Beverly Enterprises. We not only preserved our union, we made it stronger," says Thomas DeBruin, president of SEIU District 1199P.

The previous contracts expired between fall 1994 and fall 1995, leading to a three-day strike in April 1996, during which Beverly "permanently" replaced 500 of the 1,000 striking workers. This April, a federal court ordered those workers reinstated and Beverly complied.

The union will continue to pursue the hundreds of unfair labor practice charges—with the potential of \$3 million in back pay—filed with the NLRB concerning the company's conduct during and after the strike, DeBruin says.



4 America@work

They Wouldn't Do This at Home

ome 200 workers walked out at a Boliden International sulfuric acid plant in Copperhill, Tenn., April 20, 1996, after management scrapped seniority and job protections. Three weeks later, the company withdrew recognition of the Boilermakers, the Electrical Workers, the Machinists and the International Chemical Workers Council of the Food and Commercial Workers, and refused to continue bargaining. Instead, the company hired strikebreakers and armed guards to keep operations going.

More than a year later, outrage is simmering in both Stockholm and on Capitol Hill. In June, six House members asked Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to intervene, noting that Boliden's parent company, Trelleborg AB, engaged in practices that would be illegal in Sweden. Lawmakers say Trelleborg violated the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as conventions of the International Labor Organization.

Meanwhile, Ulrica Messing, Sweden's labor minister, is "disturbed and surprised about how a company can have one moral code in Sweden, but have another abroad." Trelleborg announced June 2 that it has sold the facility to a group of investors, but that "does not make things better," Messing says. "They should solve the conflict first. Anything else would be avoiding their responsibility."

Kenneth Zinn, regional coordinator for the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, which is running a campaign to help the strikers, agrees.

Trelleborg is "still responsible and needs to resolve this dispute before the effective date of sale," he says.

Mega-Win for Teamsters Ends Reign of Terror

ourteen years after Frank Lorenzo's reign of terror busted Continental Airlines' unions—and despite the company's harsh antiunion campaign—the Teamsters won a June election to represent nearly 5,000 Continental mechanics.

The mechanics voted in a mail-ballot election in June following an energetic campaign focusing on job security and the company's outsourcing of airplane maintenance, closing of maintenance bases in Los Angeles and Denver and furloughing of nearly 2,000 mechanics. "Our families are tired of being laid off and bounced around the country," said Howard Chisen, a furloughed Continental mechanic from Denver. "And we need to bring work that the company has outsourced back inhouse, where we can do it right the first time."

The IBT undertook a massive outreach campaign that included more than 1,700 furloughed mechanics in the Los Angeles and Denver areas and used door-to-door visits and phone banking. Each mechanic received a video, "One Vote, Once Voice—No Vote, No Voice."

And in a show of new labor solidarity, the AFL-CIO pitched in with a Houston phone bank and housecalls by Organizing Institute's interns and apprentices.

Ride my car: The Teamsters' truck leaves the company's shuttle running empty





orkers' muscle mushroomed June 28 in Quincy, Fla., when almost 2,000 union supporters rallied for Quincy Farms mushroom workers, who are trying to organize with the Farm Workers.

The unionists and backers, including AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson and religious and civil rights groups, came from as far away as New Orleans and New York and heard from speakers including UFW President Arturo Rodriguez and Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Joseph Lowery.

Pay and benefits are secondary issues for the workers, says Frank Curiel, a UFW organizer. "The big issue is that the workers want to be treated with dignity," he says. For example, he says, workers have to sign in and out to use the restroom.

In March 1996, 85 workers lost their jobs after a peaceful demonstration during their lunch break. Only 23 workers were rehired.

"What began as a situation that outraged local citizens of northwestern Florida has captured the attention of people who uphold the values of democracy and justice everywhere," says Marilyn Lenard, president of the Florida AFL-CIO.

"I think the workers are very strong," says Curiel. "And we have sympathy for the workers' plight within this community. Are we encouraged? Oh yeah!"

Surrents ***

China Down

hina, which this summer held onto its Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status over the objections of the labor movement, is emerging as the next formidable contender as a U.S. dollar magnet. The country is staking out its market position in much the same way Japan did decades ago—by dominating markets in inexpensive goods, like cameras, shoes and toys. Chinese products now constitute 27 percent of imported consumer goods, up from 12 percent in 1990—one \$5 purchase at a time.

"The massive and growing U.S. trade deficit with China makes clear the serious consequences of China's non-reciprocal and discriminatory trade and investment policies," AFL-CIO International Affairs Director Barbara Shailor told the House Ways and Means subcommittee on trade June 17. "These policies have cost American workers jobs and increased downward pressure on their wages."

Even auto imports are not immune. The UAW predicts steady increases in Chinese auto production in the coming years that will exceed the country's domestic requirements, fed by a "virtual requirement that companies seeking to sell autos and auto parts in China...locate their production in that country."

ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

AFSCME In late June, social workers, case workers, and maintenance, transportation and clerical workers at New York City's Little Flower Children Services voted for representation by AFSCME District Council 11, Local 215. A unionbusting law firm and a 4 percent pay raise two days before the election didn't sway the 526 workers. AFSCME's drive to organize 11,000 San Diego County independent home care workers started strong when 600 new members joined United Domestic Workers, an AFSCME affiliate. In Illinois, AFSCME Council 31 organizers brought in 300 new members, including the Champaign County Circuit Court clerks and State's Attorney support staff, the Kane County Health Department's professional and non-professional staffs and the Glen Ellyn School District's support staff.

AFT By a 114-1 vote, licensed practical nurses and technicians at Philadelphia's Episcopal Hospital said Union Yes! to the AFT-affiliated Health Professionals and Allied Employees.

ALPA The Airline Pilots will represent 350 pilots and flight engineers at Emery Worldwide Airlines after picking up 64.4 percent of the vote in a July election.

IAM More than 250 workers at three federal work sites voted for Machinists representation in recent elections. At Fort Irwin, Calif., 187 workers cast ballots for the IAM, as did 47 employees of Cobra Co. (a contractor at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland) and 22 workers employed by the U.S. Army in Oahu, Hawaii.

SEIU The organizing work of a

INTELLECTUAL

ntellectuals and artists from more than two dozen colleges are seeking to renew the links between academia and the labor movement by founding an organization tentatively named Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the group at a Washington, D.C., founding meeting how teach-ins, first held at Columbia University and now spread to 20 other campuses, have given the Federation's officers an opportunity to "share our message of concern and hope for America's working families with thousands of students, teachers, artists and writers.

"They've inspired us," Sweeney said, "to...commit ourselves to becoming once again...a leading

progressive force, the key component of a broad coalition for economic justice, meaningful democracy and social rejuvenation." He urged the group to help in the task of organizing workers "by inspiring more teachins...and personally taking part in rallies and protests on behalf of workers who are organizing."

The new group discussed setting as its guiding principle the promotion of a culture that supports the efforts of all working people to improve their lives. Participants focused on broad themes regarding workers' rights and working conditions, and discussed possible actions the group can take in the fall to educate the public about workers' economic situation and the role of unions.

half-dozen Service Employees West Coast local unions paid off in July when a unit of almost 3,000 San Joaquin County (Calif.) workers voted to join SEIU Local 790. SEIU locals 6, 347, 535, 616 and 715 threw their support and members into the organizing drive for the professional and paraprofessional workers. SEIU Local 2028 won recognition for a unit of 300 janitors employed by South Coast in San Diego. In Seattle, 130 health care workers at Providence Sound Home Health and Hospice voted for SEIU District 1199NW. SEIU Local 509 won an election for 120 workers at Community Mental Health Services in New Bedford, Mass.

TEAMSTERS The Teamsters recently scored multiple victories, organizing 104 employees at Mohawk Ambulance in

Schenectady, N.Y.; 96 drivers and office workers at the Rock River Waste Reclamation District in Rockford, Ill.; and 60 employees at

employees at
Davco Transportation in
Collingswood, N.J. In June, more
than 180 non-professional court
workers in Harrisburg, Pa., voted
for Teamsters representation, as
did 254 workers at WNA Hopple
Plastics in Cincinnati.

UNITE A majority of the 600 workers at the Marshall's Distribution Center in Bridgewater, Va., signed union recognition cards with UNITE, and the company agreed to begin bargaining in late June. ■



Play It Again

he National Mediation Board has ordered a new election for US Airways passenger service employees, finding that the airlines' conduct "interfered with, influenced or coerced employees' choice of representative."

An overwhelming number of the ballots cast by ticket agents, reservationists and customer service personnel in a January election—3,973 vs. 217—favored Communications Workers representation. But because the total fell short of the 50 percent-plusone threshold of the 9,300 member workforce, required under the Railway Labor Act, the result was discarded.

"US Airways used its 'roundtable' process in a way which the board has determined to constitute interference with employee free choice," the NMB ruled. "Roundtable" is a kinder, gentler name for "company union," CWA says. The union also pointed to a large number of furloughed workers included in the total voting group, and management's refusal to supply a list of workers eligible to vote.

Since the January vote, management has begun scaling back operations to gain negotiating leverage with the Air Line Pilots, and has continued restructuring and closing reservation centers—all of which could contribute to a CWA victory. "This new election presents a real opportunity for US Airways passenger service employees" by giving them the chance "to make a free choice—and to have a real voice in their careers," the union says.

The NMB granted 60 days for a new election, 15 days longer than for the first election, to "mitigate the taint of the carrier's election interference." Ballots went out August 1.

OUT FRONT

he tide is turning, and it feels great.

This is no time for complacency, but we need to see, and feel and capitalize on recent successes:

- Every week, we're racking up organizing wins that are building labor's strength. From internationals to locals, unions are allocating more resources, staff, energy and creativity to organizing. Look at what's happening at the Organizing Institute: More organizers have been trained so far in 1997 than in the same period last year—and unions are calling for more! These investments are enabling unions to go after more and bigger units, often in bold new ways. The investments are paying off.
- The National Labor Relations
 Board has requested an injunction that would order the
 Detroit Newspaper Agency to
 put the locked-out workers back
 on the job. A crowd of 125,000
 turned out in June to support the
 workers in their two-year struggle.
- Bargaining together, 14 unions representing 46,000 GE employees won a contract offer that included an 8.75 percent wage

increase over three years and job security provisions.

- With the sale of Gargiulo to Coastal Berry, now the largest direct employer of strawberry pickers, and nationwide pressure on retailers to support strawberry workers' right to organize, California's berry pickers are closer to finding better lives the union way (see page 9). An out-of-court settlement in a class-action suit won hundreds of workers \$575,000 in back pay in compensation for hours the workers had put in "off the clock."
- Central labor councils are building community-wide working family power through charged-up mobilization efforts, and labor is building a grassroots national issues mobilization structure to hold politicians accountable to working families.
- A new generation of union activists is being trained through Union Summer, and we're making the most of the wisdom and experience of our elders through Senior Summer.

These have been high-profile successes—the kind that generate media coverage and word-of-mouth attention. When we approach workers on jobsites we're trying to organize, or walk into bargaining sessions, we're riding a wave of momentum.

Now we've got to capture that power to make more waves. Use it to our advantage. Turn up the heat. Rededicate and recharge ourselves daily for the big and small battles ahead.

The waves will get bigger and the power more impressive. And we will win for working families.

Privatizers

BEWARE

here is a difference between public and privatized government services, and privatizers proceed at their own risk, says the U.S. Supreme Court.

The high court ruled June 23 in *Richardson v. McKnight* that the private operator of a state prison can be sued because it does not have the same legal standing as the state government.

"The court's message is clear enough," says Al Bilik, president of the AFL-CIO's Public Employee Department, made up of 35 international unions. "To the forces of reinvention in and out of government who have insisted that the government's role is to steer, but not to row, the court has warned, 'Proceed at your own risk' through the privatization rapids."

"Government employees typically act with a different system. They work within a system that is responsible through elected officials to voters...and a private firm undertakes that task for profit and potentially in competition with other firms," the court's ruling says.



by John J. Sweeney

Ployment Really Too Low for Our Own Good? UnemP

If it looks so good, why does it feel so wrong?

n recent months, newspapers and television have been trumpeting the news that the official unemployment rate has reached its lowest levels in some 25 years—so low that the Federal Reserve Board keeps threatening to raise interest rates to slow the economy. The Wall Street Journal reports that employers are hiring people they normally would shun, like a 19-year-old would-be bus driver with purple-tinted hair. Pundits wonder darkly about how our economy can tolerate so many people working without sparking severe inflation. Yet the real wonder isn't why so many people are working—it's why so many people aren't.

The United States recently completed its sixth year of economic recovery. The upturn added more than 13 million new jobs, helping to push the unemployment rate down to 5 percent and lower, the lowest levels in more than two decades. But that official rate doesn't tell the whole story.

In June, for example, 6.8 million workers were listed as officially unemployed, resulting in a relatively low rate of 5 percent. That total didn't include the marginally attached, discouraged and involuntary part-time workers. These are folks who can't find full-time work, are barred from opportunities because they don't have access to transportation or child care or have given up actively looking for work because they don't believe jobs are available. When these folks are counted, the unemployment rate is actually 9.2 percent, or 12.7 million workers

The Federal Reserve, whose decisions affect interest rates at banks around the country, is

mandated by law to seek to strike a balance between price stability and job stability. But that doesn't always hap-

pen: Fearing that low unemployment indicated an overheated economy, the Fed has kept interest rates up. Higher interest rates raise the cost of living for workers by raising mortgage payments and raising interest payments on consumer debts. They also slow construction and other forms of investment and put on hold public-sector initiatives like school and municipal buildings, reining in the economy while taking a lash to workers.

If, instead of raising interest rates, the Fed were to lower them, unemployment would fall. According to the economic regularity known as Okun's Law, every percentage point reduction in the unemployment rate results in a 2 percent increase in output. The 1997 Economic Report of the President states that the 2 percent drop in the unemployment rate

> since 1992, for example, produced a 4 percent increase in annual output. That works out to roughly \$300 billion, or \$3,000 for every American household which means a lot more demand for products. That's good for business. It also means more job security for workers.

Low unemployment helps immigrants, minorities, older

workers, inner-city dwellers and others find work that otherwise would be difficult or impossible to acquire. Owing to tight labor markets, employers are more willing to hire less skilled workers—no small consideration as the nation prepares to shift 2 million welfare recipients into the work force. Low unemployment also gives employers an incentive to spend money on training workers to make them more productive.

If the United States is to help the workers on Main Street, not just the bond coupon-clippers on Wall Street, the Federal Reserve must adopt monetary policies that reflect the needs of working families.

—David Kameras







with strawberry workers about organizing

new light is shining in Watsonville, Calif., since the historic April 13 march there supporting strawberry workers' efforts to organize with the Farm Workers. The workers have come to believe, really believe, that the union can make a difference.

First came the sale of anti-union grower Gargiulo's strawberry operations to a company that has pledged to respect workers' right to organize. Ten days later, hundreds of Gargiulo workers who had been forced to work part of their days "off the books"—without pay—were awarded \$575,000 in back pay under a tentative settlement of a class action suit. Priests had joined organizers in the field, encouraging workers to sign authorization cards.

Gargiulo's strawberry operations were sold in June to Landon Butler and David Gladstone's Coastal Berry Co., which pledged to respect workers' right to decide whether to "join or support a union organizing effort."

"This was a dramatic mark of progress for workers in the strawberry industry," says UFW President Arturo Rodriguez. "More than 1,500 strawberry workers...are now free to organize for a union of their choice without fear." The workers had valid cause for fear: colleagues in the fields had been fired for union involvement, and some growers were so adamantly anti-union that they plowed under fields rather than deal with workers' demands for decent pay and working conditions.

"Coastal Berry is not opposed to the union," says Jesus Alvarado, who is a Coastal Berry strawberry worker.

"At first I didn't support the campaign because I thought it would hurt the company. Now I support the UFW because I see there is a way the company and the workers can prosper if there is cooperation, and that is what we want, those of us who are organizing," he says.

"The union has helped 55 people gain their jobs back," says strawberry worker Lupe Lara. "I registered two times and they didn't call me to work in the company. Now with the support of the UFW they gave me my job back, which I thought they were never going to give me because I supported the union last year. Now I'm working because the union helped me."

In mid-July, UFW and allies still faced plenty of hard work in their efforts to secure a better life for the strawberry workers. The union has been preparing for an election, easing workers' longheld fears of company pay-back for union activity, holding demonstrations and leafleting against Driscoll growers for intimidating workers and fighting a bizarre attempt by Western Growers Association to stop the election. WGA filed charges on June 30 with California's Agricultural Labor Relations Board, claiming it is illegal for Coastal Berry Co. to honor the agreement with the UFW to allow strawberry workers the right to organize without fear of threats or retaliation.

"WGA is attempting to sabotage a framework for peace and cooperation between strawberry workers and Coastal Berry Co.," says Dolores Huerta, UFW co-founder.

Vowing not to allow WGA to stand in the way, at press time the Farm Workers were asking the ALRB to dismiss WGA's effort to block the election.



AST MOBILIZING TO WIN

by James B. Parks and David Kameras

hen 30,000 unionists, students, environmentalists and members of religious, civil rights, women's and community groups rally in Watsonville, Calif., on behalf of strawberry workers, that's Street Heat.

When 300 union members march in support of 11 Estero, Fla., fire fighters whose jobs were contracted out, that's Street Heat.

When 2,000 marchers from as far away as New York City and Cleveland brave the hot Florida sun in support of Quincy Farms mushroom workers, that's Street Heat.

And when 165 Illinois union members dominate a congressional field hearing on the TEAM Act, that's Street Heat, too.

Face it: Nothing beats a good show of power—people power.

And that's what Street Heat is all about.

Street Heat is the name of a new national mobilization network, a key part of the AFL-ClO's Union Cities effort being adopted by central labor councils across the country. It means using people power—bringing unions together at the local level and enlisting allies such as civil rights and religious groups—for social and economic

change. People power can result in bold and powerful actions ranging from small protests to massive rallies to large-scale get-out-the-vote drives.

Each central labor council seeking Union City designation is being asked to recruit and activate at least 1 percent of its membership as a mobilization team. "I think they [CLCs] are the hub that the spokes must go out from to hold everything and everybody together," says Charles Davis, president of the Shreveport, La., AFL-CIO. "They must be a focal point for unions to bind together, with each one remembering that an injury to one is an injury to all."

CLCs start by meeting with local unions, determining the key priorities of each, spreading the word about how joining forces can contribute to individual union efforts and together creating a plan and structure for generating Street Heat. Many local unions and Jobs with Justice chapters are handing out pledge cards asking union members to commit to a certain number of actions each year. Some also are using the forms to recruit residents active in community groups. CLCs are creating infrastructures—databases, phone trees and more—for contacting, revving up and turning out the activists who've signed pledges.

Why Street Heat? Why now?
Because it's time to move from defense to offense



and return to the roots of union power—leveraging the strength of numbers to support organizing drives, turning up the heat on anti-union and anti-worker bosses and reminding politicians that working families voted them into office. And Street Heat is the single most important way CLCs can support labor's top priority—organizing.

In addition to mobilizing in the workplace, several California CLCs are creating Labor Neighbor programs to mobilize union members where they live. In San Francisco, for example, the program's five key goals are building a political structure by identifying and training members to serve as precinct coordinators, voter registrars and phone bank coordinators; asking neighbors to support union struggles by, for example, joining a picket line at a local supermarket; supporting organizing campaigns like SEIU Local 250's home care effort; preparing for district elections; and getting involved in neigh-

they settled with the union at the very next bargaining session.

The Solidarity Committee also showed its clout by taking on the Moline, Ill., school board—and winning. About 100 union members stormed a school board meeting demanding that the board bargain with school bus drivers represented by AFSCME. Again, the board settled as soon as negotiations resumed.

Street Heat mobilization involves communities in the struggle for workers' rights. In Detroit, the support of community groups has been an important part of the newspaper workers' fight against the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News*. A coalition of more than 800 religious leaders and citizen groups has supported the workers and taken their struggle to stockholders' meetings. Detroit's Catholic bishop called on the papers to settle the strike.

Community support was most evident during

ment," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who led the members and representatives of state feds, CLCs and 45 unions from 40 states. "The fact that thousands of religious leaders and community leaders and others came out in support is an indication of how strong solidarity is for the locked-out workers."

The Quincy Farm march brought together unionists and civil rights activists from across the country to mobilize the public on behalf of the mainly Latino and African American mushroom workers. The cooperation of community and labor was evident in the selection of the two leaders of the march, Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

"It was an unqualified success," says Paul Vasquez, Florida state director for the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department.

Tough contract talks are rarely settled without a strong showing of solidarity and determination by unions and the community. In Seattle, the King County CLC and Jobs with Justice literally stopped the music at the Fifth Avenue Theatre last February, when 18 house musicians from Local 76-493 struck after contract negotiations broke down. The theater announced it was hiring permanent replacements and that the show, Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," would go on.

What the theater had not counted on was thousands of people marching outside the theater instead of going inside to see the performance. For 13 days, community and union supporters took over the streets. The first night the show was canceled. The performances on the other nights were disasters, with sub-par scab musicians and more people outside the theater

than in the audience. Finally, the theater brought down the curtain on the scab "Beauty" and negotiated a fair deal.

The musicians' strike galvanized the community and promoted labor solidarity, says Jonathan Rosenblum, an organizer for the CLC and co-chair of the Washington State Jobs with Justice. On June 16, Libby

Poole Pressley, a member of the bargaining committee for the striking musicians, reciprocated by being arrested during an action on behalf of striking janitors, whose union had backed her struggle.

"When I showed up for our first huge rally, I was floored. Here were hundreds of people

A year and a half ago we realized we needed to build union power by taking to the streets. This is where the labor movement started and we need to go back to our roots. We formed a committee and went out and talked to all the unions, nonaffiliated unions as well. We now have a database of 700 names.... We have had a number of successful actions which have helped win contracts for members.... This is helping build a stronger CLC."

Gerald Messer, President,Quad Cities, Illinoisand Iowa AFL-CIO

borhood issues that unite residents and union members.

At the core of the Street Heat philosophy is a simple truth: if a single union demonstrates the power of group action, many unions together multiply that power.

Municipal workers in Rock Island, Ill., for example, gained their new pay raises with help from the Quad Cities, Ill. and Iowa CLC's Solidarity Committee. When town supervisors hired a union-busting lawyer and refused to negotiate a new contract with AFSCME, Quad Cities' 700-member strong committee leaped into action. Over 300 people showed up at a supervisors' meeting last summer to voice support for the workers. Then they took to the phones, repeatedly calling supervisors to see where they stood on the negotiations.

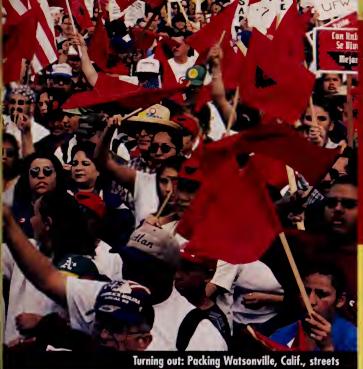
It didn't take long for the message to get through. Supervisors not only began negotiating,

Action! Motown '97 on June 20–21, when the religious community sponsored a prayer vigil in front of the *News* and a demonstration by religious groups. Throughout the city, union and nonunion workers alike staged peaceful actions against corporate greed.

And they marched, 120,000 strong, through the streets of Motown. "It's such an important march for the labor move-

Community support: Key part of Street Heat

REBECCA COOK



helping us out in a stunning show of labor and community solidarity. To us striking musicians, it felt like magic to have the power of that many people behind us. And I have no illusions about what kind of contract we would have had if we had not had that support," Pressley says.

"Power is like a muscle," says Atlanta AFL-CIO President Stewart Acuff. "It is built with wise exercise. The smart use of power builds more power and wins more victories."

Street Heat is building political muscle, as well as organizing and bargaining power. In July, the AFL-CIO kicked off a national grassroots issues mobilization network that will add new juice to labor's ability to mobilize for legislative and political action. Organizers are being trained now to mobilize working families to lobby their members of Congress on critical issues and hold members accountable for their votes. Departing from labor's more traditional mobilization around elections, this project—for which unions are dedicating staff members one to two days a week-will entail year-round work. Issues organizing has begun, with staff ratcheting up activity on such legislative battles as NAFTA, the TEAM Act and the right to organize.

This spring, the Quad Cities volunteers flexed their political muscle by endorsing some members of the Moline City Council and running labor candidates against others. "Today we have a majority of Democrats and labor people on the council in a Republican area," says Gerald Messer, president of the Quad Cities CLC.

With planning, hard work and an investment of resources, Street Heat can change a community. "You send a pretty clear lesson when folks are about to be permanently replaced and 50 folks show up on the employer's door step" and the workers get their jobs back, Acuff says.

The Atlanta CLC has developed a "culture of mobilization," he adds. "We place a lot of value on mobilization. We talk about it at every labor

Our local steering committee includes representatives of community organizations, and when we decide to mobilize for an event, we ask ourselves how to use the event to build unity among labor, community and religious organizations. For each mobilization, we challenge ourselves to include two new organizations."

—Jonathan Rosenblum, former director, Washington State Jobs with Justice

DAVID BACON

council meeting, and we honor activists." The CLC's mobilization committee continually plans mobilization strategies, he says. Committee members know which locals get the largest turnouts and for which actions.

As a result, Atlanta can really put heat in the streets. The CLC recently

mobilized over 1,500 people for six events in just five weeks. On May 22, 85 members from 12 Atlanta unions picketed and then barged into the offices of Boliden Corp., which owns a chemical plant in Copperhill, Tenn., where 200 workers have been on strike for more than a year. Two weeks later on June 7, 1,200 union members attended the regional organizing conference, followed by a march and rally on behalf of DeKalb County sanitation workers, who are trying to organize. Seventy Atlanta unionists marched June 12 against the local affiliate of General Electricowned NBC to protest treatment of workers in the Detroit newspaper lockout and in support of GE workers, who were in tough contract negotiations. The affiliate is owned by Gannett, which

also owns the *Detroit News*. Then Atlantans joined thousands of marchers in Detroit for Action Motown '97 June 21.

Next, 90 Atlanta-area union members met with Valujet's CEO to push for a fair contract following a June 27 "Ask a Working Woman" session with Flight Attendants President Pat Friend and AFL-CIO Working Women Director Karen Nussbaum. The busy month ended the next day with 50 Atlantans driving six hours to Quincy, Fla., to march for the mushroom workers.

Over time, mobilization will demonstrate to workers attempting to organize that they are not alone, help union membership grow and strengthen the labor movement by building stronger ties and more visibility locally.

Street Heat can swing the odds in favor of working families in many kinds of fights.

As Acuff puts it, "You win some fights just by showing up and showing you're ready to fight. Some you win by beating the boss, by going to the gates of Hell and back. You don't win some no matter what you do. But you don't win any if you're not ready to fight."

Street Heat Basics

Want to bring Street Heat to your community? The AFL-CIO is publishing a new manual, *Street Heat: Mobilizing to Win*, to help the local labor movement heat up the streets. Here are the basics:

- Bring unions together. Involve local unions in every stage of planning and carrying out Street Heat. The CLC's role is to coordinate, not duplicate, the activities of local unions.
- Build the structure. With local affiliates, determine who will do what, what resources are needed and the ground rules for mobilization. You'll need a steering committee, individual union coordinators, captains for key tasks and mobilization coordinators, for starts.
- Set priorities. How will Street Heat help in organizing drives? Legislative and political action? Major contract fights?
- Put the tools in place. You'll need a decent database, for example, to keep track of
 activists, as well as telephone trees and other methods to reach them.
- Educate and recruit members. Make sure they know, and are reminded frequently, how important mobilizing capacity is and why they should sign on.
- Reach out to the community. Involve local chapters of constituency groups, and build bridges with other community and religious groups that share the commitment to economic and social justice. Some allies will be with you across-the-board, while others will work with you on specific issues or actions. All are important.

For the step-by-step how-to, after September 1 call 202-637-5042. For national issues mobilization info, call 202-637-5393.



CHANGING THE FACI



s the labor mov

s the labor movement works to grow in numbers and in strength, unions are reaching out to a more diverse

workforce. New emphasis on organizing, leadership development and building community alliances is changing the face of labor and winning the economic benefits of union membership for more people of color and women.

As women and people of color enter the workforce in increasing numbers, unions are beginning to reflect the changes. They're building new bridges to communities of color through local partnerships with civil rights and religious groups and active involvement in policy issues affecting low-income and minority workers. Unions also are crafting leadership development efforts that, over time, will change the face of leadership to better mirror membership.

OF LABOR

BY JAMES B. PARKS

ILLUSTRATION BY VINCE MCINDOE

"When working people join together and reach beyond the barriers of color and culture, they can shake and remake the world," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "We will build a movement so strong, so inclusive, so energetic that we will raise the wages, lift the spirits and strengthen the solidarity of every working man and woman."

Census projections show that women and people of color—who today are more likely than white workers and men to join unions and who benefit most from union membership—could make up the majority of the workforce in the near future. "People of color

are saying 'Yes' to the union more often than anyone else," says Oscar Sanchez, executive director of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

Unions with diverse organizing staffs have an advantage when organizing workers of color, particularly immigrants. Workers are more comfortable and receptive when contacted by people who look and speak as they do, Sanchez says.

"All people naturally gravitate to persons they can relate to, who understand their concerns for their children and appreciate their culture, like knowing why you can't meet on Sunday or why you want to meet on Sunday," says UNITE Vice President Katie Quan.

During an organizing drive among Vietnamese immigrants in Texas, a Vietnamese/ Chinese organizer joined two "big tall white guys" for a home visit, Quan says. "These guys were shocked when the organizer took her shoes off at the door, went straight to the living room and sat on the floor with her legs crossed and started talking in Vietnamese. The family was bringing out food to her.

"It's hard enough to get in the door when you're organizing, but let's face it, those guys would have tracked in their muddy shoes and they never would've gotten in the door."

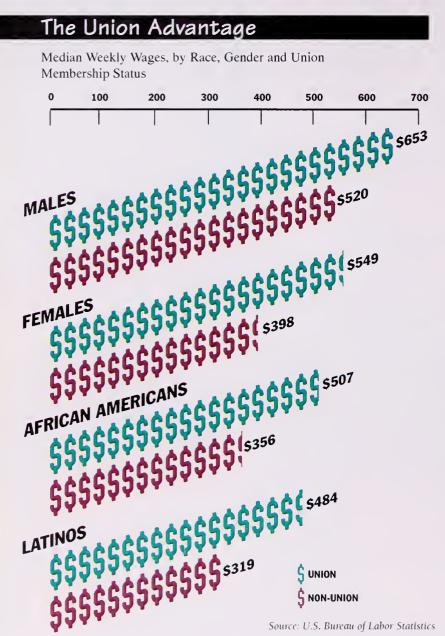
Most immigrant communities have a deep sense of identity; winning trust can be tough for outsiders. Diversity in an organizing staff also helps unions cross language barriers.

George R. Gudger, vice president of the Laborers, says as his union hired more people of color as organizers, it gained 50,000 new members—most from the public sector, which is heavily staffed by women and people of color.

"The only way to represent all people is for all people to be able to step up to the plate," Gudger says.

LIUNA created a new department to develop methods for getting people of color and women involved in the union. The office is headed by Gudger, an international vice president. His appointment signaled to members that the leadership was serious about fostering diversity, he says. Similarly, the Machinists created a new department devoted to working women, and many affiliates and state and local central bodies are creating women's committees. The Electronic Workers set a goal to hire people of color and women at every level of union activity. That target serves as a constant reminder for staff and locals of the goal of diversity across the board.

To enlist women and people of color, unions must do more than look and speak right: they've got to *do* right, establishing the labor movement as a champion for the rights of *all* people. Unions must be willing to speak out and act on issues that affect people of color and women. To give this effort a boost, the AFL-CIO's Working Women Department has conducted a massive national survey of working women. At a September conference in Washington, D.C., the survey results will be translated into a legislative agenda addressing the needs and concerns of working women.



"With 5.5 million women, we are the largest working women's organization," says Karen Nussbaum, director of the Working Women Department.

Championing the causes of women and people of color builds community support for the labor movement, as well as community involvement in labor struggles. As an example, Norman Hill, president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, cites the UFCW organizing drive among mainly fcmale, African American poultry workers in the South. In addition to trying to represent the workers, the union helped them file discrimination complaints. The union gained community backing by demonstrating its commitment to helping women and people of color.

It's important to build links in a community before the organizing begins.

"The social ties in communities of color

are so strong that unions cannot go in and ignore the community leaders. the ministers, community activists and civil rights groups," says Richard Womack, director of the AFL-CIO's Civil and Human Rights Department. "It's counterproductive to come to them when your campaign is in trouble, seeking their help. Their first question, and it's a legitimate one, is, 'Why didn't you come to us in the first place?"

At its June convention, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists designed new plans for lending organizing help to affiliated unions, calling on its chapters to spearhead efforts to take the union message to places of worship and community groups.

Changing the Face of Leadership— Gradually

The face of leadership sends a strong message about whether people of color and women are welcome in and well represented by a union. But changing the face of

leadership is proving to be a much harder and longer process than changing to organize women and minorities. As new union members gain experience and benefit from the training and leadership development many unions now provide, they will move into higher ranks—over time. Jump-starting change, however, has required changing some rules.

The AFL-CIO has done so twice. In 1979, the Federation opened opportunities for more women to join the Executive Council by electing persons who were not union presidents, and in 1995 the Federation created the position of executive vice president and expanded the size of the council to add people of color and women. As a result, of the council's 54 members, 16 are women or persons of color, including Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. Chavez-Thompson, recently named to President

Clinton's National Initiative on Race commission, became the first person of color to serve as a principal officer of the Federation. And in a recent letter, Sweeney encouraged affiliates to include women and people of color as delegates to the AFL-CIO convention in September.

The Executive Council established a Full Participation Committee to promote policies that will increase diversity in the labor movement. Several committee recommendations have been implemented and are increasing the role of women and people of color, both at the AFL-CIO and in the affiliates. For example, the Organizing Institute is providing training programs designed to encourage women and people of color to become organizers. The AFL-CIO is providing scholarships for leadership training to its constituency groups, another committee recommendation.

"It's safe to say that achieving diversity at the AFL-CIO is still a work in progress," says Arlene Holt, executive assistant to Chavez-Thompson. "But there is a strong commitment by the AFL-CIO leadership team, John Sweeney, Rich Trumka and Linda, to make sure that full participation at every level of the labor movement becomes a reality."

Holt personifies this commitment as the first person of color to head the staff of a principal officer at the AFL-CIO.

A number of affiliates have made meaningful progress in reflecting the make-up of their memberships. The Service Employees' 1992 convention made broadening the union's leadership a priority on a par with

Information, Please

For information and resources for developing people of color and women for union leadership, contact:

A. Philip Randolph Institute	202-289-2774
AFL-CIO Civil and Human	
Rights Department	202-637-5270
AFL-CIO Working Women	
Department	202-637-5390
Asian Pacific American Labor	
Alliance	202-842-1263
Coalition of Black Trade	
Unionists	202-429-1203
Coalition of Labor Union	
Women	202-466-4610
George Meany Center for	
Labor Studies	301-431-6400
Labor Council for Latin	
American Advancement	202-347-4223

organizing and politics. Out of that commitment was born the Leadership Development Program, which has trained a new layer of leaders, particularly, but not limited to, people of color. The program includes leadership roundtables, staff enrichment workshops, and women's and civil rights conferences, says William Fletcher, director of SEIU's Education Department before coming to the AFL-CIO in the same role in 1996.

SEIU placed some of its new leaders into top spots at its 1996 convention by expanding its Executive Council and creating three executive vice president positions, two of which are held by people of color. The same convention elected a woman, Betty Bednarczyk, as secretary-treasurer.

At the Teamsters, President Ron Carey has made diversity a central theme of his administration, creating a Human Rights Commission within union headquarters and adopting a human rights policy calling for women and people of color to be hired.

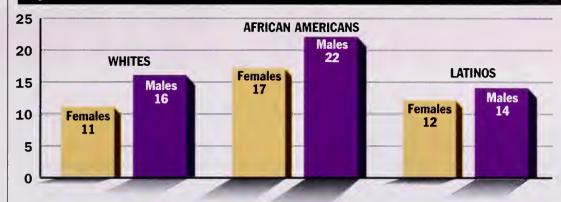
Over the past six years, the number of people of color and women on the IBT international staff has increased, says Claude Brown, director of the union's Corporate and Strategic Initiatives Department. The directors of two key Teamster departments—Brown's and Safety and Health—are African American; and two members of the executive board are people of color, both elected this year.

The Communications Workers 1997 convention directed all union staff and local elected officials to be trained in managing diversity. The executive board took the training in 1995, says Mary Mays Carroll of the CWA Civil

Rights Department.
The union also created a National Committee on Equity to monitor all CWA programs to ensure that the leadership reflects the diversity of the membership.

In the two years since the Ladies' Garment Workers and ACTWU merged into UNITE, the percentage of women and people of color on the executive board has increased, even though the number of board members has decreased. And the same is true of department heads. Most new directors

Percentage of Workers Who Are Union Members, by Race and Gender



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

were promoted from within, and many are women who had served in the second tier of management, says Desma Holcomb, who was promoted in March from deputy director to research director. One of UNITE's executive vice presidents, Edgar Romney, is an African American and one of its vice presidents, Clayola Brown, is a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

For the first time in union history, Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts appointed African Americans, Judy Medley and James L. Gibbs, in 1995 and 1996 respectively, as aides in his office. Even though such appointments are important as symbols, they are only a beginning. To make diversity an evident priority throughout the organization, says Gibbs, such appointees must not be pigeonholed in civil rights jobs, but involved

in key union activities, such as collective bargaining, legislation, finance and organizing.

Even unions with a long tradition of diversity must constantly reinforce the commitment to inclusion. AFT, for example, was founded by women teachers. Since its base is in large urban public school systems, the union has a large pool of qualified women and people of color to draw on for leaders. The union's constitution and bylaws prohibit discrimination in hiring staff. Even

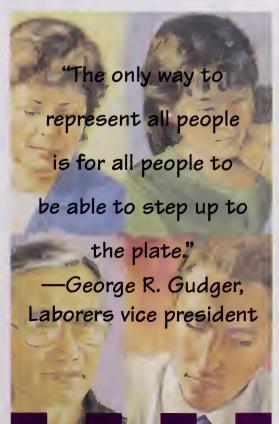
with that large pool and constitutional backup, AFT makes a "conscious effort" not to shut out any groups when it hires staff or selects executive board members, says Barbara van Blake, AFT's director of human rights. And that policy is reinforced by the top leadership. The most striking example of the union's diversity was the 1997 election of a woman, Sandra Feldman, to succeed the late Albert Shanker as president.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women has served as an incubator for women leaders in the labor movement, says CLUW President Gloria Johnson. "In fact, I think our leadership development has been one of our biggest contributions to the labor movement." CLUW members in various unions are given the opportunity to prove themselves and draw the attention of other unions, she says, citing as examples UFCW Vice President Pat Scarcelli; New Jersey AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan; and May Ying Chen, assistant manager of UNITE Local 2325 and board member of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance.

AFSCME, says William Lucy, one of the few African Americans serving as secretary-treasurer of an international union, also has an extensive leadership education program for women. Today, nearly half of all elected leaders within the union are women.

The move for more diversity is a call for the labor movement to return to its roots and to open its doors to all working people who are seeking dignity, a better life for their families and a more just society.

"Unions were created to enable those who work for a living and who have no economic or political power to unite to gain power," says Ed Brown, vice president of the Longshoremen's Association. "When you have a philosophy like that, you can't leave anybody out."



From One Generation to the Mext: UMION SUMMET

By Muriel H. Cooper

his is not summer camp," says Claudia Penilla, a sophomore from East Los Angeles College who has stood in the rain and the blistering heat trying to talk union with hotel workers in New Orleans.

Penilla is one of nearly 1,000 interns participating in this year's Union Summer, the AFL-CIO initiative launched in 1996 to give college students, community activists and workers a firsthand look at the labor movement through organizing drives, contract campaigns and community outreach work.

For three and a half weeks, the interns visit worksites and make housecalls. They interview residents about neighborhood concerns. They debate strategies, they stage rallies and they hand out leaflets—

"The diversity in Denver is great. We had to put aside our differences and work together because we knew if we couldn't work together, we couldn't ask workers to do the same. What we found out is that it is amazing what you can do when you get together."

—Christina Rivera, Union Summer intern in Denver in all kinds of weather.

"My activists would rather leaflet in the heat than in the rain," says Neneki Lee, a former Los Angeles Union Summer intern who's back this year as site coordinator in New Orleans. "I sent them out one day in a rain storm and they thought I was crazy. But that's part of it. I tell them we are on the front end of an organizing activity for a living wage. We have to do the nuts and bolts of the work, which is trying to get workers'

names and addresses."

In 19 sites across the country, activists with Union Summer and a new initiative, Senior Summer, are petitioning, demonstrating and rallying for American workers and their families.

Senior Summer, which debuted this year, is a natural progression and companion of Union

Summer, bringing to the mix the experience and tenacity of retired union members.

The intergenerational activists are working together in Bergen County, N.J., Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, New York City and Seattle. Side by side with community coalitions, they're pushing to keep privatization out of Bergen Pines Hospital in New Jersey.

"We are working hard to lay the groundwork because if we don't, that's 2,000 jobs down the tube," says Nick Kourambis, a 72-year-old Teamsters retiree serving as Senior Summer co-coordinator in Bergen County. "The struggle is continuous and we have to keep fighting and we have to keep organizing new workers.

"I helped organize thousands of workers in my lifetime," he says.

"That's my message to young people. You have got to continue to increase organizing efforts."

And as the Union Summer interns are learning,

"I couldn't get out to a meeting because I couldn't get my [wheel]chair in, but can man the phones and call people.... Letting young peopl experience your experience can create enthusiasm."

—Nick Kourambit

an co-coordinator e Senior Summer i Bergen County, N.

Teamsters retir

72-year-o



enior Sum

that's not easy. "It's frustrating," says Penilla. "Some of the workers don't want anything to do with you because they are afraid of losing their jobs. So you try to explain that the union can help them get better benefits and wages and respect on the job. And some say, 'You have a point,' but others say, 'Are you going to support my kids if I get fired?" "

"You can't always have fun," notes Margaret Sowma, co-coordinator for L.A. Senior Summer and a UNITE retiree. "Life has its serious moments and I've learned that you have got to take the good with the bad."

Looking back-through the eyes of Senior Summer colleagues and by studying bits of labor history-provides perspective that helps make the hard work worthwhile. The

Strawberry support: New York Union Summer interns rally to

Union Summer experience this year in Denver, for example, included a camping trip near the site of the 1914 Ludlow massacre.

"The camping trip was an intergenerational learning experience," says site co-coordinator Esther Song. "Most of the people left in the town are mining widows. They remembered the massacre, when the militia and the com-

> pany burned the town down. It was very interesting to listen to them talk about their husbands going off to work in the mines and [the] fear of [their] not coming back. They said the mines were your life or your death. Many of them became active in the union's ladies' auxiliary because the mines were so unsafe," she says.

> Union Summer has a profound effect on the lives of the activists. Many go back into their communities or campuses and organize workers, coalitions or student groups.

"I loved Union Summer," says Lee. "It was an awesome experience, learning how to set up picket lines and participating in the actions."

"I found Union Summer... very fulfilling," says Corey Beauford, a Norfolk (Va.) State student who is interning in New Orleans this summer. "There is gratification in

knowing that I am helping people help themselves. This experience also made me realize how important people's voices are in politics. I have seen the impact that people can have when they come together, and that is something that I will take with me and use back on campus," he says.

Christina Rivera, a Santa Rosa

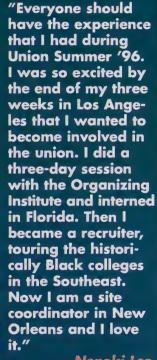
(Calif.) Junior College student interning with Union Summer in Denver, agrees. "My parents had kind of funky jobs. I mean they just worked," says Rivera, the daughter of migrant farmworkers. "I didn't know that there were people who existed and cared about making a change. I think the union people I met through Union Summer are some of the

most important people I will ever meet," she

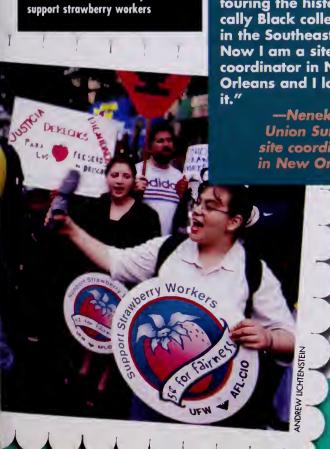
Several of the sites will have a second wave of interns this month, picking up where others left off. "The first wave of interns helped move the campaign at Western Beef in New York City," says Dominic Chan, the site cocoordinator. "It's to the point where they may get card authorization.

"A lot of our interns in New York didn't know much about labor. After the wave, they know that labor is worthwhile and plays an important role in society and in improving and raising wage standards," says Chan.

"You can literally see people's activism level grow," says Song. "It is so inspiring."



-Neneki Lee. **Union Summer** site coordinator in New Orleans



"I recently went to a

meeting of retirees

and we were talk-

ing about Senior

couldn't get them

to stop talking. We

ground working and

we can tell what we

have gone through

the pitfalls. And the

-Margaret Sowma,

UNITE retiree and

co-coordinator of

Senior Summer in

Los Angeles

and how to avoid

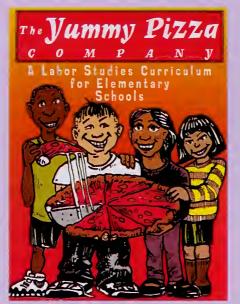
way to do that is

through a union."

Summer and I

have the back-

Pizza Wins Them Over Every



he Yummy Pizza Company caters to the stomach and the mind.

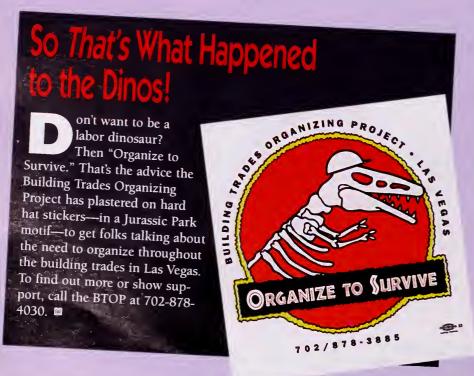
Actually, it's a curriculum, designed by three members of the California Federation of Teachers, that introduces elementary school students to the work world.

The curriculum creates a role-play of work in a pizza factory. Kids learn the difference between work and play, examine why people work and see themselves as future workers. During the course, they "work" in the factory, learn about the importance of unions, pick up conflictresolution skills and, best of all, produce small pizzas on an assembly line. (For schools that don't

allow cooking, the curriculum includes a modeling clay option.)

The Yummy Pizza Company costs \$3 for one copy, and \$2 each for orders of 10 or more. "Unions can order Yummy Pizza in bulk and donate them to local school districts," says Fred Glass, communications director for the CFT.

For more information call 510-832-8812 or write to Labor in the Schools Committee, California Federation of Teachers, One Kaiser Plaza, Suite 1440, Oakland, Calif. 94612.



GARGANO'S MANY SCANDALS

hy is a 'master of sleazy politics' destroying jobs at the Port Authority?" The in-yourface question screams from the front of a Transport Workers brochure, and 1,200 TWU members want answers.

Charles Gargano, a political appointee who serves as vice chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is using workers as a scapegoat for years of mismanagement at the agency, TWU Local 1400 says. Meanwhile, the local says, he was implicated by the New York Times in a scheme to direct economic development aid to companies later making big contributions to his patron, New York Gov. George Pataki (R). In all, Local 1400 says, he raised some \$14 million for Pataki's 1994 campaign.

Now Gargano is trying to slash jobs and force concessions from workers who remain—all in the name of privatization. He's even brought in a union-busting law firm to handle labor negotiations. But Local 1400, the largest local at the Port Authority, is fighting back.

"It may be obvious, but it bears repeating: PRIVATIZATION = PATRONAGE = UNION-BUSTING," union President John Stewart and Secretary-Treasurer Synetta Anderson say in the brochure. "There is no justification for what Gargano and Pataki are doing to the Port Authority. Destroying our jobs is just another way for them and their friends to get richer."

If you would like to contribute or get copies of the brochure, include your title and organization name and write to the Campaign to Stop Privatization, TWU Local 1400, 821 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003.

SIDARITY FIR

heck your local television listings now and convince your friends and relatives to tune in. Plan a house party with the neighbors.

Get ready to celebrate labor with Wheel of Fortune's week-long Salute to America's Working Families, beginning September 1.

The five shows that week will feature 12 union families—including one father-son team and two mother-daughter teams—solving word puzzles to win more than \$250,000 in union-made-in-the-USA prizes. The bounty includes automobiles by UAW, a cruise courtesy of the Sea-

farers, hotel stays with Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees and a Harley Davidson motorcycle by the Machinists.

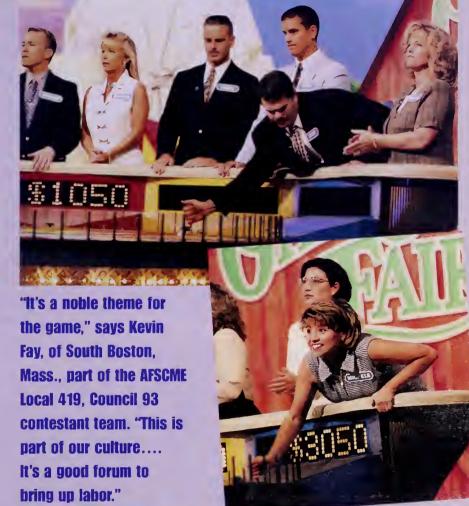
The shows were taped August 1 at the Ohio State Fair in Columbus, with host Pat Sajack, letter-turning legend Vanna White and an audience of some more than 5,000 union members. The union families included members of AFSCME, the Service Employees, Teamsters, Postal Workers, Flight Attendants, Office and Professional Employees, Machinists and UAW.

"Americans are working harder and smarter than ever before," Wheel of Fortune producer Harry Friedman says. "We think a salute to workers, their unions and the products and services they provide our society is a fitting tribute to offer on Labor Day."

U.S. workers, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney notes, are the most productive and efficient workers in the world. They "have made personal sacrifices and investments to improve the products and services they produce. They deserve the highest possible respect for their major contributions to make our country the economic power that it is."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
NEAL LAUREN AND JOHN VICTOR

Spin control: Union members on Wheel of Fortune. At right, IAM President R. Thomas Buffenbarger with contestants



"I think this country is strong and our unions made this country strong," says OPEIU Local 29 team member Steve Klups, of San Mateo, Calif. "We all need to stick together and buy American."

Shopfalk

alting is an effective organizing technique used primarily by the building trades unions, but more affiliates could use salting to reach nonunion workers. Salting involves placing volunteer organizers in nonunion jobs to inform workers about the benefits of union membership.

The legality of the tactic was upheld in a unanimous November 1995 Supreme Court ruling (National Labor Relations Board vs. Town & Country Electric, Inc.). The employer contended that 10 union electricians it refused to interview and the one it did interview, hire and later fire were not "employees" under the National Labor Relations Act because, as organizers, they had "divided loyalties" and could not be fully loyal to the employer. The high court agreed with the NLRB that no conflict of loyalties existed and that such workers are covered by the NLRA.

Since that ruling, nonunion employers have sought federal legislation that would give them the right to discriminate against union members in hiring. Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R-Ark.), sponsor of S. 328, the misnamed Truth in Employment Act, says his measure would not change the definition of employee, but rather would establish that "an employer is not required to hire a person seeking employment for the primary purpose of furthering the objectives of an organization other than that employer."

Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, testified at a June 10 Senate hearing, chaired by Hutchinson, that salting is a legitimate tactic. He said employers who complain that salting is unfair really are objecting that the "law prohibits them from refusing to

hire and from discharging employees simply because they intend to participate in union organizing."

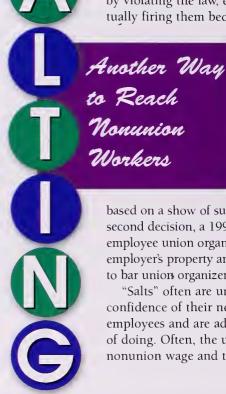
Nonunion employers charged at the Senate hearing that unions use salting to force them to spend money fighting NLRB charges. But employers targeted for salting often invite charges by violating the law, either failing to hire the organizers or eventually firing them because of their union activities. Salts also are

instructed to report any unsafe workplace practices to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The building trades unions have used salting more frequently in recent years, largely in response to two court rulings. The first, a 1987 3rd District Court decision, freed employers from pre-hire agreements when they expired if the union had not won an NLRB election or obtained voluntary recognition from the employer

based on a show of support from a majority of its employees. The second decision, a 1992 Supreme Court ruling, held that non-employee union organizers do not have the right to access an employer's property and that employers may use state trespass laws to bar union organizers from on-site access to employees.

"Salts" often are unemployed union members. To gain the confidence of their new co-workers, salts must be exemplary employees and are advised to do the best work they are capable of doing. Often, the union pays them the difference between the nonunion wage and the union scale.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Do local unions have to "buy" into the Union Privilege program? What's the deal? Who funds this program?

A. Local and international unions do not have to buy their way into these programs and no dues money goes into the development or operation of any

Union Privilege program. Union Privilege develops, oversees and markets moneysaving benefits, but it's up to each international union to choose the programs it will endorse. These benefits can be valuable tools for organizing and retaining members. For information, call 800-472-2005.

Q. As part of our organizing drive, we'd like to educate workers about the advantages of a union contract for protection from arbitrary termination. What legal protections do nonunion workers have?

A. Very few. The general rule is that of "employment at will": a nonunion worker can be fired at any time for any reason, or for no reason at all. In contrast, a unionized worker usually has the right to a hearing, during which the employer must show "just"

cause" for the termination. Federal law does prohibit discharge based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age (for persons over 40), pregnancy or disability. In addition, state or local law may prohibit discrimination based on marital status, or,

in rare cases, sexual orientation. Limited recourse may also be available for "whistle-blowers" (employees terminated because they report an employer's violation of state or federal law, such as OSHA), or for workers who file for benefits such as workers' compensation.

Q. I want to help revitalize the labor movement through organizing. Where can I start?

A. One option is to start with your central labor council. More than 80 councils have signed up to be part of the Union

Cities program, agreeing to focus more resources and efforts on organizing. For further information, contact the AFL-CIO Department of Field Mobilization at 202-637-5280.

SPICE UP YOUR ACTIVITIES

Grabbing the public's attention is key to making a rally or demonstration have real impact. The Activist Cookbook: Creative Actions for a Fair Economy is a full-course menu of creative action ideas, showcasing some of the best media stunts, street theater and novel direct actions from the labor and social justice movements.

Looking a bit like a handbook from the radi-



cal 1960s, the 100-page manual focuses on actions that can be adapted easily by unions to direct attention to wealth, poverty and inequality.

Reload

The Activist Cookbook can be ordered for \$16 (bulk rates are available) from United for a Fair Economy. 37 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston, Mass. 02111; phone: 617-423-2148.

UNCOVERING THE FRUITS OF FORCED LABOR

China's People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police are doing brisk business here in the United States, marketing goods made in forced-labor camps. But the Food and Commercial Workers have launched a nationwide campaign to "Kick the PLA Out of the USA."

A new report by the AFL-CIO's Food and Allied Service Trades Department names PLA and People's Armed Police companies doing business in the United States, as well as their products and their U.S. customers.

Unionists have asked President Clinton and Congress to block companies fronting for the PLA and PAP from doing business with U.S. companies and to revoke their representatives' visas. The UFCW campaign also is seeking pledges from companies to refrain from knowingly doing business with companies owned or operated by China's most visible security apparatus.

For a copy of FAST's report, China's People's Liberation Army: Where to Find PLA Companies in America, What Products the PLA Sells in America and Who Are the PLA's Customers, fax 202-737-7208.

SURFIN' FOR AMMO

In an economic war, as in any war, it pays to know the enemy. Check out these Internet sites for company information that may be helpful

for bargaining and organizing efforts: http://www.sec.gov—Visit the Securities and Exchange Commission

site to see corporate filings. Proxy statements are listed as DEF 14A. Go to "Search the EDGAR Database," then "Search the EDGAR Archives." Download the WordPerfect conversion utility found at the

http://www.nsg-stockguide.com—Details about companies whose securities 'Tools and Utilities" link.

http://gsionline.com—Company financial data with links to company trade on NASDAQ.

http://info.wsj.com—Wall Street Journal's company briefing books have websites

background, recent news, stock charts and financial data. http://www.w100.com—Lists the largest U.S. and international corporations

on the Internet, with links to their websites. http://www.essential.org/monitor/monitor.html—The multinational

http://www.hoovers.com—Capsule summaries of public companies with links to websites monitoring site.

http://www.investorweb.com—Financial information on public companies. and financial reports. http://www.reportgallery.com—Find out if a public company's annual report is online. http://www.wsrn.com—Wall Street Research Net. One-stop shopping for company research

links. Type in the stock ticker symbol and get links to your company in these categories: Company; News; Graphs/Charts; Research, Reports and Summaries; Value Added.

http://www.marketguide.com—Free economic snapshots of companies, fee-based full

reports (\$2.50/report or \$9.95/monthly for unlimited use). http://www.amcity.com—Use for hard-to-find information on private companies in a few

dozen cities.

BE A SPORT: LOOK FOR THE UNION LABEL UNION LINE

Summer means sports to many people. Show support for union workers by looking for the union label on sporting equipment.

The Auto Workers have contracts for PowerBuilt golf clubs and Louisville hockey sticks from Hillerich & Bradsby Co. The Steelworkers turn out Callaway, Tommy Armor, Wilson and Titleist golf club heads by Coastcast Corp.; Ebonite bowling balls; Louisville Slugger baseball and softball bats; golf clubs by Hillerich & Bradsby Co.; True Temper, Arnold Palmer and First Flight brand fishing reels, and golf clubs and related

items by True Temper Corp.; and Eagle brand basketballs, softballs, volleyballs and golf balls by Eagle Division of Hedstrom Co.

The Electronic Workers have contracts for Brunswick golf equipment, Miller golf equipment, sporting goods by Marshall Clark Mfg. Corp. and lacrosse

sticks by William T. Burnett. UNITE brings us baseball and motorcycle protective headgear by **Hutch Sporting** Goods, Inc.; golf clubs by Wilson Sporting Goods Co.; Air brand protective helmets by Athletic Helmet, Inc.; and American and Golden Glove brand footballs, baseballs, baseball bats and gloves by Rawlings Sporting Goods Co.

The Machinists and the Carpenters have contracts for Brunswick bowling balls, pin setters and related items by Brunswick Bowling & Billiards. The Food and Commercial Workers make ice skates (boot portion) for Riedell Shoes, Inc. The Boilermakers have contracts for Spaulding, Top Flite and Chicapee brand golf clubs by Spaulding Sports Worldwide.



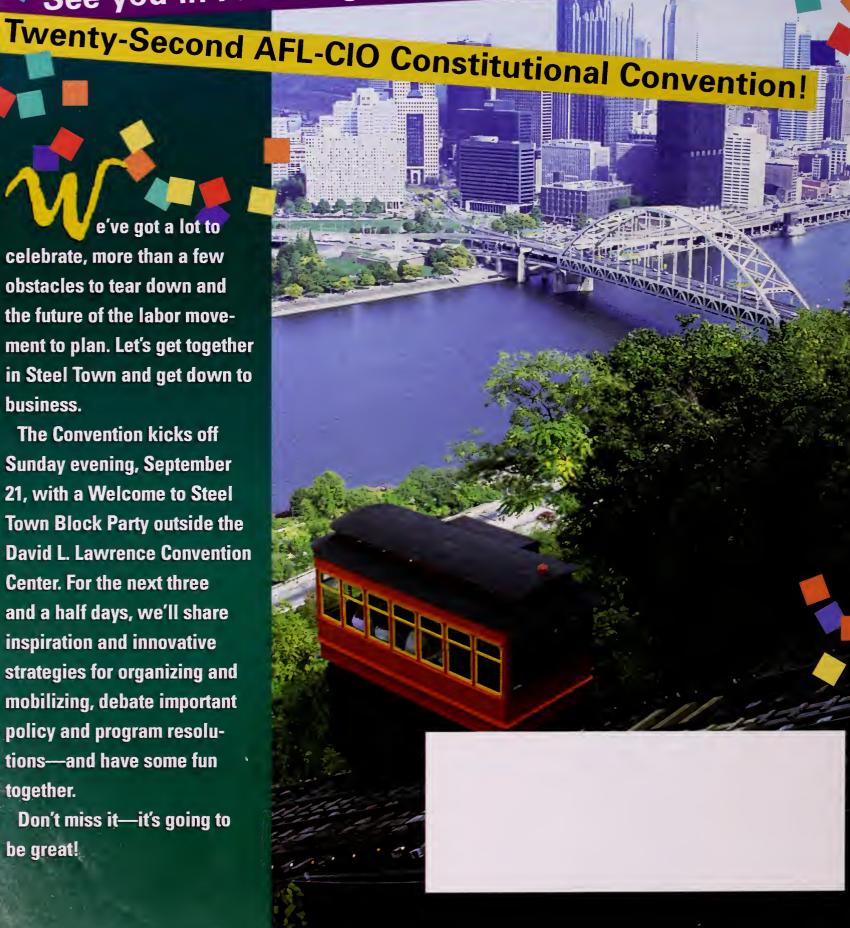
teel Town, Here We Come

See you in Pittsburgh September 22-25 at the

e've got a lot to celebrate, more than a few obstacles to tear down and the future of the labor movement to plan. Let's get together in Steel Town and get down to business.

The Convention kicks off Sunday evening, September 21, with a Welcome to Steel **Town Block Party outside the David L. Lawrence Convention** Center. For the next three and a half days, we'll share inspiration and innovative strategies for organizing and mobilizing, debate important policy and program resolutions—and have some fun together.

Don't miss it—it's going to be great!





HOW THE BUILDING

TRADES ORGANIZING

PROJECT IS OPENING

DOORS FOR LAS VEGAS

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

ORKING WOMEN, WORKING TOGETHER CHANGING ATTITUDES . MEETING IN PITTSBU



Ideas and Views From You



HOW DO YOU MOBILIZE MEMBERS?

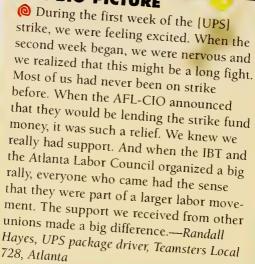
Last month's "Say What?" asked for effective ways to turn out members for mobilizations. Here's what some of you told us:

(a) The best way to recruit is to talk to people one-on-one. Go around the shop or office and ask them to sign a pledge that they will be there. The more contacts the merrier. Even though posters and mailings help, talking to the members is still the best way.—John Goldstein, secretary-treasurer, Milwaukee AFL-CIO

@ Our most effective tactic is our phone-banking system. Volunteers are recruited either during phone-banking itself or by a core group of activists working the crowd before union meetings. In the days before a rally, these volunteers call members on the out-ofwork list. Rallies are typically timed for lunchtime or the end of the work day, allowing business agents to canvass job sites in the area of the rally. Our members, having been educated by programs such as COMET, fully understand the need to turn out in large numbers.—Mike Prohaska, organizing director, LIUNA Local 79, New York City

(a) We found in our GE activities this spring that involvement on a national and interna-

THE BIG PICTURE



tional level brought excitement and enthusiasm to our local union members. Having union brothers and sisters ride hours on buses to get to rallies and arranging for international visitors drew folks to rallies and sparked energy in the fight for a good con-

tract.—Douglas Meyer, economic research and public policy director, Electronic Workers

You have to build activists slowly over time. Stay in contact, talk to them person-to-person, keep them informed about issues and activities. Give them things to do, but don't waste their time and don't burn them out with too many events too close together. And give them credit; let them know they make the difference. A simple

thank you—a phone call or a letter—is really important. Once you've built this kind of activist network, when you need them, they'll be there—and they'll bring a crowd.—V. Daniel Radford, secretary-treasurer, Cincinnati AFL-CIO

When you see unions@work and our members@work and collective power in our

that's when you see

communities@work,



GROWING ORGANIZERS

@ Bravo on your "How to Grow an Organizer" piece in the July issue. Personally, I would like to see an article or interview on the Labor Party as an alternative to the Democrats. Keep up the fine work.—Gary Olson, NWU/UAW 1981, Bethlehem, Penn.

ABOUT THE COVER

As a long-time member of Iron Workers' Local 433 in Las Vegas, Gino Guajardo recently participated in a new training program jointly developed by the Organizing Institute and the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department. In March, he was one of the first to graduate. Today, Guajardo is a staff organizer for the Building Trades Organizing Project, a far-reaching and innovative campaign that is opening doors and raising standards throughout the Las Vegas

Say What?

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF PART-TIME WORKERS?

The Teamsters' strike at UPS put the plight of parttime workers in the national spotlight. In addition, ou national "Ask A Working Woman" survey (pp. 14–15) reveals that about one-fourth of working women are part-timers, most of whom lack health-care and other benefits. How does your union prevent employers from taking advantage of parttime employees? Here's a chance to share your views and experiences. Please write to:

America@work

815 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: 71112.53@compuserve.com



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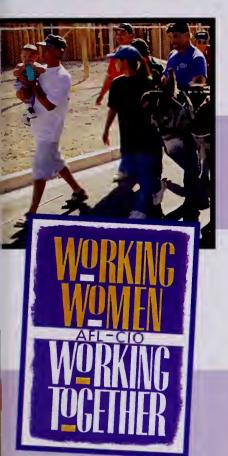
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- IN SEARCH OF A NEW ATTITUDE

 Featuring the real stories of rank-and-file members, we're taking to the airwaves as part of a new campaign to change the way America thinks about unions



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DELIVERING A MESSAGE:

Part-Time America Won't Work

In what may have been the most important strike of the decade, more than 185,000 Teamsters at United Parcel Service drew the line on the growing abuses of part-time workers—and won the support of the public and the entire labor movement in the process.

Fighting for full-time jobs and against outsourcing and a takeover of their pension benefits-the UPS workers walked off the job in early August, halting deliveries of millions of documents and packages across the

United States. The 2,000 UPS pilots represented by the Independent Pilots Association honored the Teamsters' picket lines. Striking workers turned up the heat with mass rallies and public protests across the country. And the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions quickly responded strike benefits for a lengthy

Fifteen days after the strike began, the Teamsters were back at work with a new five-year contract calling for pension improvements, new safety and subcontracting protections and

10,000 new full-time

can stand up to corporate greed," says

with loan commitments to cover

strike.

jobs. "American workers have shown that we

"We'll fight for the American Dream": **IBT President Ron Carey**

President Ron Carey. "After 15 years of taking it on the chin, working families are telling big corporations that we will fight for the American Dream."

From the beginning, the UPS strikers generated widespread support from the public. National polls showed that Americans sympathized with the striking workers by a 2-to-1 margin.

"This victory confirms an upturn in the prospects for working families and the ability of unions to strengthen the voice of workers," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "It sends a strong message to corporations: At a time when profits, productivity and executive pay are up, there is no justification for denying workers the good jobs they need to support their families and build a strong economy."

Nationwide, one in every four jobs is held by a part-time or contingent worker.

Delegates Fish for Justice

mass training for volunteer organizers was the highlight of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance convention held recently in San Francisco, where delegates got some hands-on experience at Fisherman's Wharf. Conventiongoers staged a demonstration to protest the firing of union activists and mistreatment of immigrant workers at the H&N Fish Co. Delegates also elected Guy Fujimura, a Hawaii Longshoreman, to succeed Kent Wong as APALA president. ••

Guess? Who's Being Boycotted

tudents across the country announced a "Back-to-School Boycott" of Guess? clothing last month and took to the streets in dozens of cities with actions drawing attention to the designer jean company's use of sweatshops.

"We can send a strong message with our collective buying power that we don't want our clothes made in sweatshops," says Luis Gomez of California State University in Northridge, one of many student activists who are now leafleting at campuses and department stores to educate students and shoppers about sweatshops. The U.S. Department of Labor has cited seven Guess? contractors with violations of minimum wage and overtime laws.

The student activists are affiliated with Students Stop Sweatshops, a coalition of student organizations from more than 50 college campuses and participants in the AFL-ClO's Union Summer program.



Apple Workers Ripe for Fairness

hile the Washington state apple industry is raking in big money, apple workers struggle to make ends meet. And according to An Industry Ripe for Fairness, a new report by the Teamsters, the state's taxpayers are paying for it. They're funding an estimated \$20 million in state and federal subsidies to apple growers and processors, and they're picking up the cost of public assistance for apple workers and their families.

"Apple workers are clearly not sharing in the success they've helped to create," says AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, who last month traveled to Yakima, Wash., to lead a march of apple workers demanding union recognition. "The apple industry is this state's pride and joy. But no one can be proud that apple workers are paid below or near the poverty line."

Both the IBT and Farm Workers are organizing workers throughout the statewide apple industry. @

Steelworkers Wheeling to Victory

The longest strike in modern steel history ended last month when the Steelworkers reached a new five-year agreement with Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. Ten months after walking off the job when the company reneged on its promise to provide a defined-benefit pension, the 4.500 strikers in Ohio, West Virginia and

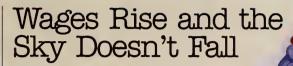
Pennsylvania overwhelmingly approved a new contract Aug. 12.

The strikers' determination and the union's innovative campaign demanding intervention by CEOs of major Wheeling-Pitt shareholders ultimately forced CEO Ron LaBow back to the bargaining table—where he agreed to restore a defined-benefit pension plan.

This is a great victory for the Wheeling-Pitt Steelworkers and their families," says USWA President George Becker. "They breathed life back into our movement and set a new standard of solidarity for all workers in this country.

The new contract includes a S1 50-an-hour wage increase and a \$2,000 signing bonus.

Rallying the strikers: USWA President George Becker



nce again, dire predictions that boosting the minimum wage would cost jobs and raise inflation have proved false.

A year after the federal minimum wage was hiked by 50 cents to \$4.75 an hour, a new study by the Economic Policy Insti-

tute finds no evidence of negative impact. In fact, teenage employment which some claimed would decline because employers would curtail hiring to compensate for increased wages—actually went up.

In addition, economists Jared Bernstein and John Schmitt found that the higher minimum wage substantially boosted the earnings of low-wage workers, and that the benefits of the minimum-wage increase went primarily to low-income working families.

"Given the statistically and economically insignificant (and mostly positive) employment effects of the change, it might be more useful if the next debate spends less time focusing on the cost of the increase and more time on the benefits to low-income families," the report's authors conclude.

This month, the minimum wage jumped another 40 cents to \$5.15 an hour. Citing the EPI study, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) introduced a bill to raise the minimum wage in five steps to \$7.25 an hour by 2002. Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.) introduced an identical measure in the House.

The EPI study, The Sky Hasn't Fallen: An Evaluation of the Minimum Wage Increase, is available for \$8, postage-paid; call 800-EPI-4844 or 202-331-5510, or check EPI's website at www.epinet.org.

SPOTLIGHT

The Living Wage Wins Again

ow-wage workers in yet another community have won a living wage. This time it's in Duluth, Minn., where the city council passed a living-wage ordinance applicable to firms doing business with or receiving aid from the city. The ordinance requires those employers to pay at least 90 percent of their workers at least \$7.25 an hour, indexed for inflation. Employers that provide health insurance may pay \$6.50 an hour.

The new ordinance is the result of lobbying and community organizing by AFSCME Council 96 and the Duluth Coalition for a Living Wage, which argued that tax dollars

should not create or subsidize poverty-wage jobs. Roughly 100 businesses in the area receive municipal money each year.

The ordinance does not cover businesses earning less than \$362,500 a year, using city money to renovate old buildings, performing municipal service contracts or receiving aid through industrial development bonds.

The statute's passage was eased by business interests' fears that if the decision were made by voter referendum, even fewer exemptions would be included, says Erik Peterson of AFSCME Council 96 and the coalition.



Currents

A Summer to Remember

or two years, the Los Angeles New Otani Hotel has been fiercely fighting efforts by its low-wage employees to organize with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees. So when the hotel declared its intention to develop a golf course, Senior Summer activists were more than a little teed off-and decided to do something about it. They attended two city council meetings to voice their outrage, and convinced council members to vote the proposal down.

Across the country, hundreds of Union Summer and Senior Summer participants shared similar experiences in organizing camin support of K-Mart workers in San Jose and staged street theater on behalf of janitors in Denver. Across the country, they leafleted and solicited pledges of support for California strawberry workers from shoppers, grocery store owners and community and religious

> "We continued to show a new generation of

activists a vision of labor as a social movement," says Union Summer Director Liann Ainsworth. "We recruited hundreds of Generation Xer's, debunked the myth that they were apathetic and built one of the largest educational internship programs in the country geared toward protecting workers' rights and fighting for economic justice."

labor has made to society and the

Biblical mandates for justice," said

Bishop Jesse DeWitt, president of

the National Interfaith Committee

organized the services.

for Worker Justice (NICWJ), which



munity Ambulance in Union, N.J and 45 at Friendly Transportation in Oakland, Calif. **CWA** The New Era Independent Union, representing 600 workers who make baseball caps in Buffalc and Derby, N.Y., voted to affiliate with CWA. CWA also won elections for 100 post-exchange employees at Cannon Air Force

Base in New Mexico and 25 employees at First Class Day Care

ORGANIZI

AFSCME By a five-to-one margi employees of the Architect of the Capitol voted for AFSCME Coun cil 26 representation. The 600 cu todians, laborers and service employees are the largest group of workers to organize under the

new Congressional Accountabilit

Act. ERRATA: An item in our las

issue misidentified the AFSCME

District Council that will represe

workers at Little Flower Children

Services in New York. They will I

ATU The Amalgamated Transit

Union recently organized 1,000

cord, Calif., 75 at DAVE Transportation in Portland, Ore., 62 at

workers at Laidlaw Transit in Co

Laidlaw in Pittsburgh, 50 at Com

represented by D.C. 1707.

LIUNA The Laborers scored thre organizing victories involving lumber warehouse and door assembly workers at Georgia-Pacific in Chicago, workers from River Parish Maintenance at the River Bend Nuclear Power site in St. Francisville, La., and workers at Egyptian Concrete in Bonne Terre, Mo.

Center in Monmouth Junction, N.

MINE WORKERS Reversing a loss from two years ago, the Mine Workers decisively won a bid to represent 157 workers at Talon Manufacturing in Herndon, Va. Workers at Renco Inc.'s Costain surface mine near Beckley, W.Va., also voted UMWA.

SEIU SEIU's new slogan "Leading the Way" says it all. In the first five months of 1997, SEIU organized more

From Parades to Pulpits, America Celebrates Labor Day

long with the usual picnics and parades, thousands of union members celebrated the Labor Day weekend in a special way this year. They attended services in 33 cities

CHICAGO AFLICIO where priests, rabbis and ministers invited workers and union leaders to speak on the

right to organize.

In Chicago alone, more than 150 such services were held following a kick-off luncheon attended by 500 religious and labor activists. In Las Vegas, 600 workers attended interfaith services and union members made presentations at 12 churches. In Buffalo, services for 165 congregations were followed by a laborreligion "living wage" parade. And

Senior action: Organizing in Los Angeles

paigns in dozens of cities and

touched the lives of thousands of

workers and their families. They

staged rallies against anti-union

Miami, Chicago and Los Angeles.

New York City and hotel workers

in New Orleans, made house calls

Sprint in Milwaukee, Denver,

They talked about organizing

with Western Beef workers in

in Watsonville, Calif., strawberry workers turned out for an early Mass in the fields.

The services focused on the contributions

Across the country, the holiday weekend brought scores of other activities. One of the biggest was a parade and picnic in Hampton, Ill., hosted by the Quad City AFL-CIO and attended by Vice President Al Gore, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. Some union members celebrated the recent victory at UPS with "Action Day for Good Jobs" rallies in 30 cities. Others tuned in to the Wheel of Fortune game show's five-day tribute to America's workers, their unions and the products they make.



Holiday festivities:

Worshiping in Chicago, marching in Hampton, Ill.

than 17,000 new

GHLIGHTS

embers. Recently, 13 SEIU locals rganized workers at 30 nursing omes nationwide.

EAMSTERS IBT recently orgazed 84 employees at Laidlaw ansit in Salem, N.H., drivers, arehouse and workers at Sinonik loving and Storage in ollingswood, N.J., 50 workers at enn Tank Lines in Hollywood, la., and 44 oil tankers in Chicago.

SWA The Steelworkers union on its first recognition campaign nder a neutrality clause negotiat-I with Alcoa last year, organizing 70 aluminum production workers ithout an NLRB election.

TU AND LOCOMOTIVE NGINEERS Nearly 600 conducors and engineers on the Wisconn Central Railroad have been rganized by the United Transortation Union and the Locomove Engineers, ending the carrier's atus as the nation's largest onunion railroad. 🏻



APRI on the March

t their recent convention in Las Vegas, members of the A. Philip Randolph Institute took time out to march in support of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees' efforts to organize the anti-union New York, New York hotel and casino. A primary focus of the APRI convention was how to use organizing and political action to increase APRI's effectiveness in the labor movement and in the community.

Caregivers Rise Up at Sunrise

Tver since Sunrise Hospital in ⊢Las Vegas was taken over by Columbia/HCA four years ago, workloads have soared and patient care has deteriorated. But the hospital workers are turning to SEIU for help, and a campaign for union recognition involving more than 2,000 health care workers is well under way. At the same time, the union launched a national campaign to expose the profit-gouging and budget-slashing practices of the nation's largest hospital chain—the self-described Wal-Mart of health care.

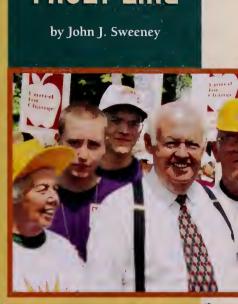
Last March, union activists at Sunrise founded **CODE** Columbia (Caregivers Organized to Demand Excellence at Columbia/HCA)

and began organizing the community around a fight to restore standards in the hospital. The fight gained momentum in the spring when federal agencies began investigating the chain for possible Medicare and Medicaid fraud, a move that resulted in a media frenzy and the firing of Columbia's two top officers. In the aftermath, Sunrise health-care workers have made several appearances on national TV news and magazine shows to talk about the quality of patient care.



OUT FRONT

cross the nation, union members and other working Americans are making phone calls, writing letters and sending postcards to their congressional representatives-urging them to put America on the right track, not the "fast track.", They know that what America really needs is fair, balanced trade agreements, negotiated with input from workers and consumers. And they know that in the three and a half years since America took the fast track to NAFTA, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost, the safety of our food has been jeopardized and the environment along the U.S.-Mexico border has deteriorated.



They also know that the real issue in the unfolding debate over fast-track trade is this: Will America's working families have a voice in the new economy?

For the last two decades, the voices of America's workers have been drowned out by big businesses and their political allieswhose interests have dominated not only our trade policies, but other economic and social policies as well.

Now, working families are standing astride a major conceptual fault line in the changing global economy. On one side is a world marketplace in which only a small group of corporate elite prosper. In this world, governments sell out the environment and shrug off consumer protections to attract investment. Demands for a living wage are met with the threat to seek cheaper labor elsewhere, and workers must compete in a race to the bottom.

On the other side of the fault line is an America on a different path, one where the global economy works for working families. In this world, America recognizes that what's good for workers is good for the economy. And rather than allowing trade to drag down wages across the globe, America leads the way to a future where trade agreements include fundamental rules-including worker protections, prohibitions against child labor, environmental standards and rights to free speech and freedom of association.

Clearly, the global market is here and here to stay. The issue is not whether we should negotiate trade agreements with other countries, it's how. It's about whether our trade agreements are fair and balanced, or whether our living standards, our consumer protections and the quality of our environment become bargaining chips in the negotiations.

But more to the point, it's about whether working families share in the advantages and opportunities created by the 21st century economy. And ultimately, the outcome depends on us, our ability to refocus energy and resources on organizing, political action, mobilization, coalition-building and capital strategies—and to create a strong voice for working families in the changing economy.



L - C I O CONVENTIO GLANG

ecial Conferences

Workers Investing in America: Union pension fund trustees will highlight new investment initiotives and strotegies (Sept. 19)

Building o Political Voice for American Workers: Politicol octivists will focus on lobor's strotegies for increosing workers' political voices and opproaches in the fight for the right to organize (Sept. 19)

Building o Movement of Americo's Workers. Unions ond community lobor bodies will shore strotegies for organizing as the cornerstone of labor's comeback effort and hear from important allies, including Vice President Al Gore (Sept. 20)

- Building o Voice for Workers in Our Communities. Porticipants will discuss community-based programs to educate ond mobilize members, organize new members and create o powerful politicol and legislative voice for lobor (Sept. 21)
- Pittsburgh Lobor Teoch-In sponsored by the local lobor community (Sept. 21)

You Have a Voice Concert

• On the evening of Sept. 24, delegates are invited to a rock concert of the Benedum Center featuring ortists Billy Brogg, Tish Hinojoso, Toshi Reogon and the Bones of Contention. Ticket prices ronge from \$10 to \$20 (\$5 to \$12 for students and workers under oge 24).

Convention Highlights

- Presentation of the Murray-Green-Meany-Kirkland Community Services Aword (Sept. 22)
- Recognition of GE workers from oround the globe (Sept. 24)
- Presentation of the George Meony Humon Rights Aword to Muchtor Pokpohon (Sept. 24)
- Election of officers (Sept. 24)
- Solute to Union Cities (Sept. 25)
- Reports from Committees on the Constitution, Program Resolutions, Policy Resolutions and the Committee 2000, and Subcommittees on Organizing, Political Action, Representing Workers in the Globol Economy ond Workers in the Community (Sept. 22-25)

Featured Speakers

- Sen. Thomos Doschle (Sept. 22)
- Sen. Arlen Specter (Sept. 22)
- Rep. Richard A. Gephordt (Sept. 23)
- Secretory of Lobor Alexis Hermon (Sept. 23)
- MANA President Eliso Sonchez (Sept. 23)
- President Bill Clinton (Sept. 24)
- NAACP President Kweisi Mfume (Sept. 24)
- Sen. Edword M. Kennedy (Sept. 25)
- Rev. Jesse Jockson (Sept. 25)

by their elected leaders—and have grown increasingly alienated from government. But last year, by educating and mobilizing around working family issues, the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions laid the groundwork for building a grassroots movement that can force the American political system to respond to the concerns of average-wage workers.

Since the 1996 elections, the AFL-CIO has continued to aggressively advocate a working family agenda by educating and mobilizing through the media and grassroots activities, promoting workers' values through specific legislation and policy actions and mobilizing workers to register to vote and to vote for candidates who represent working families' interest—regardless of party affiliation.

Create a new voice for workers in a changing global economy.

As power shifts steadily toward employers and away from unions, most working families have been falling behind in the new global economy. Increasingly, unions are responding to today's challenges by adopting innovative strategies for giving workers a stronger voice—at the bargaining table, in the workplace, in the corporate boardroom and in the community.

For its part, the AFL-CIO is actively challenging short-term speculation in capital markets, irresponsible corporate transactions and runaway CEO pay. Through a new Center for Working Capital, the AFL-CIO is helping to organize workers' financial assets to better serve the interests of workers. It is increasing its strategic research and coordinated bargaining campaign capacity and supporting initiatives for workplace democracy. And through the newly created Solidarity Center and a reorganized International Affairs Department, the AFL-CIO is helping to develop a worldwide movement to organize employees of multinational companies and strengthen the ability to bargain collectively in the new global economy.

Create a new voice for workers in our communities.

Restoring the growth of the labor movement will take a concerted effort—locally, nationally and internationally—to change attitudes and perceptions, rebuild the labor movement at the community level and join forces with allies around a shared agenda.

Working with affiliates, the AFL-CIO launched the innovative Union Cities program, which challenges local unions to come together around a set of eight goals designed to build stronger communities and improve the lives of working families. Through a new "Street Heat" program, the AFL-CIO is leading an effort to mobilize union members in organizing, political, legislative and bargaining battles. Through organizing drives, living-wage campaigns and nationwide "teach-ins," the Federation is renewing critical alliances with religious, civil rights, community and academic groups. The AFL-CIO is building on its outreach to working women and workers of color by implementing a new policy campaign focusing on working women's issues and intensifying efforts to reflect the diversity of the workforce throughout the labor movement. And recently, the AFL-CIO launched a pilot campaign—using free and paid media-to increase awareness of unions

and what they do (see p. 16). At a time when scientific surveys show public attitudes toward unions mixed but improving, America's unions face a critical window of opportunity—to build a better understanding of the labor movement as well as to create a stronger voice for all working Americans. This month, AFL-CIO convention delegates will come up with a blueprint for action and outreach strategies to make sure the voices of working families are heard throughout the nation.

Welcome to **Union City!**

Convention delegates at the Lawrence Convention Center won't be able to miss the first-ever, nearly life-sized exhibition of "The Road to Union City."

> Convention-goers will be able to follow the "Union-Made in USA" road to eight main kiosks (we don't want to give away too much, but each has a name like Union Hall or Civic Center).

Inside are displays and materials that explain the eight steps to becoming a Union City-from "Putting

Heat on the Street" to "Growing and Growing" to "Teaching Working People about Common Sense Economics." Along the way, delegates

can hit the bar—the space bar, that is, on the computer hookup at the National Issues Mobilization Action Center. There, delegates can send members of Congress a prewritten or original letter via e-mail or fax or call using the AFL-CIO's toll free number. If they prefer, they can send postcards—there will be 5,000 of them on hand. And they also can surf the Internet and explore

LaborNet and labor-related

websites. At the end of the road, there's a Union Shoppe—where delegates can purchase unionmade, union-message souvenirs and other display items.

—James B. Parks

t had all started with his simple petition for a raise eight months ago. Now, Hector Lopez was standing in the scorching August heat before a crowd of 300 enthusiastic Las Vegas construction workers. From the back of a pickup truck, and surrounded by workers from a dozen trades, the concrete worker declared in Spanish: "I will continue fighting to make this campaign go forward!" Waving signs that read, "Workers Have Rights," Las vegas the hot but lively audience cheered on Lopez—one of at least a dozen Precision Concrete workers illegally fired for exercising their right to organize a union. Photography by David Bacon



OPEN HOUSE IN

as Wiegas

The Building Trades Organizing Project is opening doors for



The rally was called to protest not only the firings, but also the threats of bodily injury, spying, interrogations and other abuses—all of which were detailed in a lengthy complaint issued July 30 by the National Labor Relations Board against Precision, one of Las Vegas' largest concrete contractors. The contractor will face a hearing and, if the charges are upheld, could be liable for thousands of dollars in back pay to the illegally fired workers. The NLRB also is seeking a federal injunction against Precision.

But the Precision workers aren't the only ones fighting for decent wages, respect for their work and a future in the industry. Workers at six other Las Vegas concrete contractors are organizing; Precision is just the first contractor to be hit with a federal complaint.

"Other contractors will find themselves up against the law as workers continue to stand up for their rights in this industry," says Jim Rudicil,

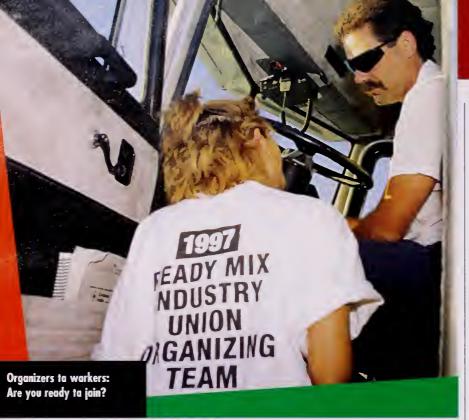
an electrician by trade who has headed the Building Trades Organizing Project (BTOP) since its Las Vegas premiere in January.

The concrete workers' campaign is one of the centerpieces of BTOP—a jointly funded alliance among the 15 building and construction trades unions, the national Building and Construction Trades Department, the AFL-CIO and the Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council—whose purpose is to organize construction workers using a first-ever industrywide, multicraft approach.

The eight-month-old pilot project is part of a strategic plan to reverse the decline of union density in the construction industry through a concentrated, coordinated campaign that may well become a model for future organizing throughout the country.

"We've never done anything like this before," says Robert Georgine,

pnstruction workers—and to a new way of organizing



president of the AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department. "We are addressing a whole market at once—by segments, instead of contractor by contractor."

With BTOP providing overall direction, coordination and staffing, the local Carpenters, Laborers, Cement Masons and Iron Workers unions are working together to help the concrete workers. Organizing backup for truck drivers and batch plant operators in the ready-mix industry comes from the Teamsters and Operating Engineers. The six mechanical trades unions—Asbestos Workers, Elevator Constructors, Electricians, Sheet Metal Workers, Plumbers and Pipefitters, and Sprinkler Fitters—are combining forces to bring union representation to workers in their crafts. And the Carpenters and Painters, Roofers and Bricklayers also are organizing to raise standards for Las Vegas construction workers.

"Union construction workers and unrepresented workers must stand side-by-side in this struggle," says Frank Caine, Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council president.

A Whole-Market Strategy

he "whole-market" campaign revolves around a strategy to organize a majority of construction workers and re-establish union density throughout the fast-growing industry. Guided by the BTOP "Principles of Unity," the campaign is designed to improve working and living standards for all construction workers through a coordinated, multicraft approach that concentrates on mobilizing and organizing the entire workforce.

Over the past 10 years, construction employment in Las Vegas has grown by more than 500 percent—to roughly 60,000 workers. Yet real annual pay in the industry is down by nearly 30 percent. "Construction in Las Vegas is booming, but until we can level wages, benefits and working conditions for all workers, it will remain an employer's market," says Georgine.

"There are plenty of union contractors on the famous Strip to point to as role models for those who don't yet treat their employees with dignity. We believe that in time, the entire construction industry in Las Vegas will enjoy competitive health through the collective bargaining process. We're building the movement that will make that happen."

The international unions' general presidents selected Las Vegas for the model BTOP project because of the strength of the building trades, projected economic growth and a supportive union infrastructure. For

"It's born from my heart," explains Tomas He

example, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees and the Service Employees have a strong organizing presence in the town.

But even in a union-friendly environment, the project has found that real change must come from within. And sometimes, that is the greatest challenge.

Participating unions realized early on that if the project was to be successful, a new approach was needed—and some traditions would have to be kicked to the curb.

During the first few months of the project, local unions concentrated on making it easier for workers to become building trades union members. This process included eliminating initiation fees and multi-tier job referral lists, accepting year-round applications for union apprenticeship programs and adding skill upgrade courses to help nonunion workers develop union journey-level skills.

"The only difference between a union member and a nonunion worker in the building trades is that nobody invited the nonunion worker to join the union," says Mark Weathers, a BTOP organizer from the IBEW in Macon, Ga.

Membership education, an ongoing focus of BTOP, also has been key. Using the building trades COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training) course, BTOP has helped union members understand why organizing is necessary. Since January, roughly 1,500 workers have attended the weekly classes—which often are taken on the road. Courtesy of BTOP's cool, air-conditioned trailer sporting a "Get COMETized" banner, instructors can pull up to job sites at lunchtime.

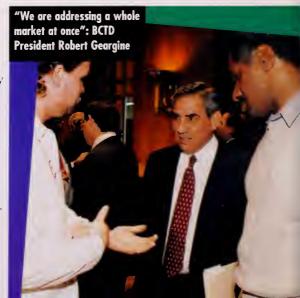
"This has been a great tool to reach out to unrepresented and represented workers on union job sites," says Weathers, who teaches classes in both English and Spanish. "By going to job sites, it gives all of the workers—union and nonunion—the belief that the local unions know that workers are the key to success."

Opening Doors, Opening Minds

pening the unions' doors and raising members' awareness of the need to organize set BTOP on the right course. The campaign followed up by letting unrepresented workers know about the new attitude in the trades through a unique program called Union Open House. Every Wednesday, workers are invited to come in for advice about problems on the job and help in taking action to enforce their rights. Since February, more than 1,000 have connected with organizers from the 15 unions and have learned about their rights on the job.

"It's against the law for your employer to SPIT on you," reads one flyer organizers provide to workers to remind them that during organizing activities, it is illegal for employers to "Spy, Promise, Intimidate or Threaten" workers for union activity.

Backed by hundreds of phone calls and visits to workers' homes and job sites, organizing campaigns have taken off. In one 10-day period, for example, organizers made 85 house visits and more than 200 contacts with workers in the readymix industry. In the concrete industry, weekly organizing committee meetings have



, a new organizer. "It's not for money or position, it's to help people."

grown to include more than 50 workers from seven contractors.

"Our challenge is to break down workers' fear and help them understand the need to take action together on common issues," says Rudicil. "We talk about the need to make all contractors play by the rules, and treat workers fairly," he adds. "If all of the employers are paying the same wages, then competition is based on who manages their company the best and not on low pay."

On job sites throughout the neon-lit town, unrepresented workers are beginning to enforce their rights. At Precision Concrete, for example, workers protested the company's lack of compliance with rules on breaks and clean drinking water. In the 115-degree heat, organizers donned a two-person camel outfit to deliver bottled water to workers and a message to the contractor: Workers deserve basic dignity. And at White Eagle, another local concrete contractor, workers recently filed a complaint charging the company with violating wage-and-hour laws by failing to pay them for overtime.

Helping workers whose right to organize has been violated is a full-time job for four BTOP organizers. Workers who have been fired, harassed, spied on, threatened or otherwise abused for union activity stream steadily into the office to swear affidavits and bear witness to their employers' actions. More than two dozen charges already are in the pipeline to the National Labor Relations Board, though only two complaints have made their way through the government's initial investigatory process—one against Precision Concrete, the other against Hardy Painting and Drywall.

As workers continue to stand up for their rights, organizers hope employers will get the message that workers have rights, and if contractors violate them, they will suffer the consequences.

"We're demonstrating support for workers on job sites by engaging in picket lines and rallies on behalf of unrepresented workers, instead of against them as we may have done in the past," explains Rudicil.

That's what happened when several electricians were fired for prounion activities. The following day, some 85 workers showed up with hard-hat stickers that said, "I'm a witness." Fearful of the potential scrutiny the workers' actions might bring, the contractor rehired the fired workers. "The employer saw there was a united front of union and nonunion workers on the job site," says Rudicil. Now, the hot pink "I'm

a witness" sticker has become a standard BTOP organizing tool.

An Organizing Bug

undreds of workers—union and not—are becoming infected with the organizing bug, and membership involvement in organizing is rising.

"It's born from my heart," explains Tomas Hernandez, a new organizer. "It's not for money or position, it's to help people."

More than 28 union members from the mechanical trades attended a recent class to learn how to make house calls to unrepresented workers, and in the ready-mix industry, union and unrepresented workers make up the organizing committee. Hundreds have learned in an advanced COMET class how to organize and have gone on to "salt"—that is, volunteer to work for nonunion contractors to inform workers about the benefits of union membership. These member-organizers help unrepresented workers understand their rights and take action



together, as well as demonstrate the skills of union workers.

And through the combined efforts of BTOP and the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute, dozens more members from local unions are getting the classroom and hands-on experience they need to reach out to nonunion co-workers in the industry. The organizers-in-training initiate house calls, staff the Union Open House, make job site visits and set up rallies and picket lines. Many go on to become full-time organizers for their local unions. In less than a year, the number of organizers employed by local building trades unions has risen from eight to 36—and all of them are former rank-and-file members.

"We understand that organizing means more than a contract or a wage increase," says Steve Muchicko, a Carpenter and the lead BTOP organizer on the concrete campaign. "It means that unions have to change within themselves. It is necessary to survive."

BTOP's presence so far has helped more than 2,800 construction workers become proud new members of Las Vegas local unions. And for BTOP organizers, the campaign has fundamentally changed the way they perceive their roles; they no longer see themselves as individuals representing their unions. "I am a building trades organizer, and I am here for the unrepresented workers," says Matt Devich, a BTOP organizer from the Plumbers and Pipefitters in Denver. "I came here because I believe in this with all of my heart."



What do working women want? When the AFL-CIO put that question to the nation's working women at the beginning of this year, the answers came in fast and furiously.

"More flexibility in work hours," said a Wisconsin woman.

"A back-up person to take care of my children when they're ill," a New Hampshire working mom replied.

"Pay for what you're really worth," said a working woman from Washington state.

In all, nearly 50,000 "Ask A Working Woman" survey replies poured in—an average of 500 a day for 100 days. And while the ages, backgrounds and occupations of the women responding to the survey varied greatly, they expressed many of the same feelings and concerns—including the strong belief that women should work together, rather than apart, to solve the problems they face in juggling their work and family roles.

This fall, the AFL-CIO is kicking off a major new initiative designed to do just that—bring working women together to solve the key work and family issues they face in today's fast-paced society. The blue-print for this new campaign was laid out September 5–7, when more than 1,700 working women from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. for the "Working Women Working Together" con-

ference sponsored by the federation's Women's Department.

The gathering gave women a chance to exchange ideas, share concerns and hear from a lineup of speakers that included women who had risen from the most oppressive of working conditions—from a sweatshop in El Monte, Calif., to a food processing plant in Tar Heel, N.C.—and such working women advocates as U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) and U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D-Calif.).

Waters (D-Calif.).
But just as importantly, conference participants got the chance to discuss and map out a new national working women's agenda and set in motion a variety of grassroots and legislative activities aimed at helping working women with two of the things they say they most need—equal pay and child care, especially for school-aged children.

"When it comes to lifting living standards, supporting families and bringing out the best in the new American workforce, working women understand better than

THE NATIONAL
SURVEY RESULTS
ARE IN:
WORKING WOMEN
WANT CHANGE
AND ARE
LOOKING
FOR HELP
FROM

anyone what needs to be done," says AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "That's what our outreach program was all about—to listen to and learn from working women."

Launched earlier this year, the AFL-CIO "Ask a Working Woman" survey was the first major survey of working women's issues since the economic recovery began. The survey asked women what they liked most—and least—about their jobs and whether they felt the people at the top of their companies were sympathetic towards the needs of working women. And to supplement the survey, the AFL-CIO also commissioned a scientific poll of working women.

Here are some of the key findings:

 Despite receiving little public attention, the issue of equal pay remains an urgent concern for

working women, 94 percent of whom described it as very important. Almost one-third of the women reported that their current job does not provide equal pay for equal work.

• Families depend more heavily than ever on women's incomes. Nearly two-thirds of working women report that they provide about half or more of their household income. And a full 41 percent of

working women head their own households.

Working women feel that things are getting worse, not better. Even though the economy is booming, job security is elusive: 54 percent of the working women surveyed said they don't have security in their current jobs.

Large numbers of working women including an even larger percentage of the many part-timers—are going without basic benefits such as paid sick leave, health coverage, and pension plans. An astonishing one-third of all working women are without employer-provided retirement benefits or affordable health care.

One of the biggest challenges working women face is juggling the demands of work and family. "Please, I need flextime in the morning, once or twice a week. So I can drop my daughter off at school and see her go in the door. If this does not happen soon, my job of 17 years will be gone," wrote one woman. And from New Hampshire, another wrote: "What I find difficult to handle is when I need to stay home from work to care for a sick child...I feel guilty missing work at times. I don't have a 'back-up' person to take care of my children when they are ill. I feel torn when my children are ill...They are what I'm working for."

Overwhelmingly, working women believe the way to solve these problems is by working together, and by getting more help from their employers, the government, working women's organizations and unions. A huge majority—79 percent—say the best way to go is to "join together and work as a group."

"Significantly, union and nonunion women support by almost identical margins the concept of working together," notes Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Johnson was one of a group of AFL-CIO leadersincluding Chavez-Thompson and Karen

Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department—who also traveled across the country to hear the stories of working women first-hand. In Atlanta, they listened

as flight attendants described how they are "treated like children" on the job. In Las Vegas, they heard working women from a Wal-Mart tell about their victory in a sexual harassment lawsuit. And in Augusta, Maine, a single mother working the night shift in a factory told how she lost her job after struggling for two years to find reliable child care.

> "Everything is harder now," said one woman, summing up the feelings of thousands of her counterparts across the nation.

"The bottom line is this: Working women want change and are looking for help," says Nussbaum. "And with 5.5 million female members, the AFL-CIO is the nation's largest organization of working women. We can be a powerful voice for all working women."

To build grassroots support for the national working woman's agenda, union women will reach out to unorganized working women as well as community, civil rights and religious groups in their

areas through a newly created "Working Women Working Together" Network. Through the network, women across the nation will focus attention on equal pay, child care and other issues.

You can help get the Working Women Working Together Network started in your

community. To get involved, call the AFL-CIO Women's Department toll-free at 1-888-971-9797—and ask your friends and co-workers to sign up too! A network of working women (photos from top): A Tennessee factory worker, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, conference participants in Washington, D.C., a UNITE member in New York City



In Search of a

nion members are making

millions of house calls
this month—but not the
way you think. They're
riding the airwaves into

We're taking to the airwaves as part of a new campaign to change the way

America thinks about unions.

America's living rooms—speaking to
working families about their jobs and their
unions—through a series of TV commercials
designed to build a better understanding of
what unions do.



Real stories told by a union construction worker, hotel worker, nurse and manufacturing worker are featured in four TV spots produced by the AFL-CIO as part of a strategic media campaign to shine a new light on America's unions. Piloted last month in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Seattle and St. Louis, and soon to air in San Antonio, the commercials—in conjunction with grassroots mobilization activities—are designed to help unions organize new members, re-energize existing members and bolster



"What I really appreciate about my job is that the union is there to back us up, making sure that we're all treated fairly. It gives us the kind of security and respect at work that we deserve."

bargaining and legislative campaigns. Their message to working Americans: "You have a voice. Make it heard. Today's unions."

It's no secret that much of the public harbors serious doubts about the effectiveness and relevance of unions. But a national poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates shows a recent increase in the percentage of working Americans ready and willing to join a union—up to 44 percent, compared to only 30 percent in 1984. The research also found that many people just don't know much about unions and how they help working families improve their lives and their communities.

"We have a wonderful story to tell, and it's one that for too long hasn't been told," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "It's a story of people joining together to solve problems at work. Of improving their families' lives by winning fair pay and better health care and pensions. Of having a real voice on the job, of

New Affitude

"When the company hit a bad patch, the union didn't walk away. We took our ideas to management and they listened. And we're turning out more motorcycles than ever."

Mike Gungrich,

upholding professional and safety standards and of working to make and keep their communities strong."

By focusing on tangible benefits achieved by working together—and on the values of hard work and personal initiative—the commercials explain that today's unions stand for fairness and opportunities for people who work hard and play by the rules. And the message is directed especially to the new workforce—the young workers, women and people of color who, according to the research, are more likely to vote for a union.

Public attitudes don't change overnight, but with consistency and repetition, the campaign is expected to solidify support—and help unions grow. And by complementing the ads with a field operation that involves union members, reaches out to the media and includes distributing brochures and buttons at work sites and community events, participating unions are hoping to raise awareness about their contributions to the community.

Rather than casting professional actors, the 60-second commercials spotlight rank-and-file union members:

• Erin, a young mother who works in a hotel kitchen, talks about how belonging to a union means that you can talk to managers—and know that they'll listen. "That's helped us get a decent wage and health benefits," she says. "It gives us the kind of security and respect at work that we deserve—that everyone deserves."



- Arthereane, a registered nurse who works on the children's ward of a busy Los Angeles clinic, says that the facility, once run by doctors and nurses, now is "more driven by dollars and cents. That means cutbacks and realignments. The union helps us nurses say, 'No, that won't do.'" She feels the union supports her so that "these kids have the care and attention that they need."
- Mike, a worker at Harley-Davidson, recalls a time when his employer was in financial trouble. "We came together as a team to get this company back on the road," he says. "The company is more profitable, working conditions are better, jobs are secure and we're turning out more motorcycles than ever."
- Michael, a construction worker on a Chicago high-rise, explains that "up here, you have to work as a team to get the job done right, done safely. The union helps us make sure that the site is safe." And, he adds, "it made sure I had the right kind of training, so I know how

"Up here, you have to work as a team to get the job done right, done safely. The union helps us make sure that the site is safe and that we're safe."

to take care of myself and take care of the job."

"These ads are about today's workers connecting with other workers to build today's unions, and an active, strong workers' movement for the next century," says Doug Dority, chair of the public affairs committee of the AFL-CIO executive council and president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. "Today's union members are proud of their work and their unions, and they are eager to tell their stories."

Harley-Davidson worker,
York, Penn.

In the coming months, the AFL-CIO will measure the effectiveness of the campaign, tracking changes in attitudes held by target audiences and overall changes in the public's



perception of unions. The evaluation will be used as the basis for a long-term media strategy.

"Today's Unions" bumper stickers, buttons, T-shirts and mugs are available. For information, call the AFL-CIO Support Services Department at 202-637-5241.

"My union makes me feel stronger, makes me feel like I'm being supported in what I'm trying to do with the patient, so these kids have the care and attention that they need."

NOT-SO-FAST TRACK

FAIR TRADE IS
GOOD FOR EVERYONE. FAST-TRACK
TRADE LEAVES
WORKERS AND
CONSUMERS
BEHIND. THAT'S
THE MESSAGE
UNION MEMBERS
ARE SENDING,
AND CONGRESS
NEEDS TO GET IT
IN A HURRY.

OEING, PROCTER & GAMBLE, GM, CHRYSLER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS ROUND-TABLE ARE ISSUING AN URGENT FUNDRAISING PLEA. MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE NEEDED, THEY

SAY, TO PRESSURE CONGRESS INTO GRANTING "FAST-TRACK" AUTHORITY FOR MORE NAFTA-STYLE TRADE DEALS. THEIR PLAN IS TO PUSH A BILL THROUGH CONGRESS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE—BECAUSE THEY'D RATHER NOT HAVE A NATIONAL DEBATE ON THE IMPACT OF FAST-TRACK TRADE. ONE LOOK AT THE FAST-TRACK RECORD, AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY. THE SPEEDY NAFTA DEAL WAS A WINDFALL FOR BIG BUSINESSES, BUT WORKERS AND CONSUMERS WERE LEFT IN THE DUST.

In the three and a half years since NAFTA was negotiated on a fast track—meaning that the president's administration made the deal and Congress wasn't allowed to amend it—America has lost more than 420,000 jobs. Corporations have been pulling up stakes and moving to Mexico, where the average wage is \$4 a day. Many employers are using the threat of plant shutdowns to hold wages

down, force concessions from their employees and avoid union organizing. The closing of factories is destroying local economies, reducing tax revenues and hurting small businesses, hospitals and communities. More contaminated foods are making their way into America's supermarkets. And increasingly severe air and water pollution is threatening the health of residents in border communities.

Is this the way America's trade deals are supposed to work? Most Americans don't think so. While everyone agrees that international trade is important to the economy and to America's long-term future, most Americans think trade deals should benefit everyone—not just give corporations a free rein to profit from lower wages. According to a recent NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, 61 percent of Americans oppose fast-track authority for negotiating trade deals. They think trade agreements should include rules and standards to protect working families, and that input from Congress is needed to give workers and consumers a voice in the process.

What's the rush? America needs fair trade, not fast-track trade. That's the message unions across the country are sending to their representatives in Congress this month. Jumping aboard the campaign to "Stop Fast Track," they're urging union members to write, call or send postcards to their members of Congress. They're setting up meetings with their congressional representatives to ask them to oppose more fast-track trade deals. They're



How'd Congress Do? A MID-YEAR REVIEW

When Congress takes a break, union members get busy—with home-district visits.

working in coalition with consumer and environmental groups and staging actions designed to draw attention to the absence of environmental, safety and worker protections in the fast-track NAFTA deal.

UNITE, for example, is organizing groups of textile workers to visit their members of Congress. The Steelworkers have put their "Rapid Response" team to the task of rallying members to write personalized letters. One Saturday in August, unions joined the Citizens Trade Campaign in a nationwide "Food Safety Day," when they leafleted customers outside supermarkets to warn them of the growing dangers of unsafe fruits and vegetables crossing the borders without adequate inspections. And the Teamsters, who have long warned the public about the dangers of unsafe trucks on the nation's highways, are staging actions throughout the country-most recently in New York, where Swingline Staplers has announced that it will close its Long Island plant and move more than 400 jobs to Mexico. Union members are asking local politicians as well as members of Congress to sign a pledge opposing fast-track authority to expand NAFTA.

This month, the AFL-CIO is coordinating a massive outreach effort to activate union members from coast to coast. The Federation is distributing hundreds of thousands of postcards, flyers and direct mail pieces and airing television commercials to educate and mobilize working families around the fast-track issue. To get copies of the postcards and the facts on fast-track trade and how to get involved, call your AFL-CIO regional office or visit the new "Action Site" at www.aflcio.org/stopfasttrack.

hen Republicans in Congress unveiled their agenda this year, it was loaded with the kind of anti-worker provisions, tax breaks for the wealthy and other big business-backed measures that have come to be commonplace since they took control in January 1995.

But by the time they left the U.S. Capitol for a month-long recess in August, a combination of grassroots pressure—much of it from union families—and tougher negotiating from the White House and congressional Democrats had defeated many of the attacks in a new budget and tax deal. "We helped working families on several fronts," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "Working with the White House, we were able to preserve the president's tax cuts for the lowest-income families, prevent rash changes in Medicare and make a good start toward providing health care for all children.

"On the downside," he adds, "were the wholesale cuts in the capital gains tax and inheritance tax that were neither needed nor wanted by the vast majority of American voters."

But Republican extremists were forced to abandon provisions to make it easier to reclassify employees as independent contractors, deny minimum wage and other labor law coverage for workfare workers, allow states to privatize their food stamp and Medicaid programs, weaken rail workers' rights, extend NAFTA to Caribbean nations and change union dues reporting requirements so that compliance could have cost unions \$86 million in start-up costs and another \$22 million annually.

So the members of Congress who had started out the year with a vow of revenge against American workers and their unions had little to show for it—a delay in confirming Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, the road-blocking of National Labor Relations Board nominations and a \$1.4 million slush fund earmarked for studying American labor policies.

But the GOP leadership's desire to punish the labor movement for exposing their records has not diminished. Later this fall, unions can expect another round of attacks on workers' rights, organizing, workfare protections, wages, the 40-hour work week and job safety.

As Congress headed home for the late-summer recess, unions around the country mobilized members for home-district visits-during which they expressed their opposition to several bills making their way through Congress. At the top of the list was "fast track" authority, the proposal to extend NAFTA-style deals to other countries. Another pressing concern was the proposed "TEAM Act," which would strip away workers' right to choose who will represent them in the workplace. The bill would enable employers to create and dominate worker committees that deal with terms and conditions of employment—in effect permitting the boss to sit on both sides of the bargaining table.

At the same time, union members used their meetings with members of Congress as an opportunity to discuss and lay the groundwork for future mobilization around an issue that affects all working Americans—restoring their right to organize to improve

their lives.

—Mike Hall





Mobile Phone

Activating members: Big rigs to the rescue



Banks

nion members may be more active in political and legislative issue campaigns when phone-banking centers are located near where they live and work. That's why SEIU Local 99, which represents 27,000 Los Angeles school employees, purchased two big rigs and converted them into mobile phone banks-which can be transported anywhere in L.A.'s sprawling county. Inside, union members can keep 70 phone lines going on behalf of issues and candidates they support—which has already made the difference in several key local

"We proved in the last election that it's an extremely effective political tool," says Local 99 President Janett Humphries. And in the political off-season, she adds, "we'll use them as mobile computer labs for our members."

Workers
at the Los Angeles Airused a unique approach to demand job security from the hotel's owner-none other than renowned jazz musician Herb Alpert. Instead of the usual petition, the workers tried to deliver to the owner a large gold record album entitled "Herb, Don't Put Us Out on the

Curb"—featuring the top 10 reasons for Herb to save their jobs. Alpert has put the hotel up for sale, but he refuses to make retention of Hotel Employees and Restaurant **Employees Local 814 members a** condition of the sale.



Send the fost Office a Message

ostal uniforms currently are made by companies that pay decent wages and benefits, but that's about to change. At the same time he proposed to add an extra cent to the cost of a stamp, Postmaster General Marvin Runyon proposed a new system for the manufacture of postal uniforms that doesn't include restrictions or safeguards against sweatshops.

For letter-writers who don't want the money they pay for postage to go in the hands of sweatshop owners, UNITE has developed stamps to affix to the back of envelopes—to send the post office a message. For more information, call UNITE at 212-265-7000, ext. 224.

Give Us Some Chants

As a third-generation union activist, an AFT member from West Hartford, Conn., and member of the singing group Bread and Roses, Ruth Goldbaum has walked many picket lines. "Some were lively and energizing, and some were draining," she says, and it's the chants that make the difference. That's why Goldbaum is taking on the task of creating a collection of chants from around the country. She calls them "chants for a lively picket line," and they include:

the old standbys...

Boss Says Cut Back, We Say Fight Back! Boss Says Give Back. We Say Fight Back! Boss Says Yes, We Say No! Boss Says Hell Yes, We Say Hell No!

... and some with a new twist...

Wanna know what all the fuss is? We are standing up for justice!

... some in more than one language...

El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido. The workers, united, will never be defeated.

... some short and sweet...

Their 2 percent Won't pay the rent!

... some with melody...

I don't know but I've been told, Boss's pockets are lined with gold. Lies and tricks will not divide Workers standing side by side!

... and some that poke fun at stuffy

Trustees cease your mythic fable. Return forthwith to the bargaining table.

If you have chants to share with the rest of the union movement, Goldbaum wants to hear from you. She can be reached at GOODCHANTS@aol.com.



ome volunteers in the Strawberry Workers Campaign for fairness really know how to draw attention to the struggle. When Minnesota union activists Mary Wagner and Jenny Downey distribute flyers at parades, baseball games, community festivals and other events, they wear strawberry costumes to help get the message across.

But they're not the only ones seen masquerading of late. Last month, a merry band of Union Summer activists in Southeastern Massachusetts donned green, feathered Sherwood Forest hats and-shouting, "Robin Hood was right"—rallied in support of SEIU Local 767 members employed at a

Attention-getters:

Masquerading in Los Angeles

(left) and Minnesota (below)

At the same time, Aztec dancers and Korean drummers were recently spotted parading down Beverly Hills' famed Rodeo Drive. Wearing uniforms, pushing luggage carts and toting vacuum cleaners, the HERE Local 11 members from Los Angeles' top hotels and tourist spots put on a colorful display as a way of demonstrating that the workers who made sacrifices to get the city's tourism trade booming are marching to the beat of a different

drummer now. They want their

fair share.

Sometimes You Feel like a

The "nuts to NAFTA" idea came from the fight to stop Congress from agreeing to fast-track authority for new trade deals.

The pistachio giveaways gave union members a chance to chat with passersby and explain that America needs fair trade—not more NAFTA-style deals that threaten jobs, wages and highway safety.

hy were members of IBT Local 85 recently distributing packets Cape Cod health care provider. of pistachios along with their leaflets at the Farmer's Market in San Francisco? It was their way of letting shoppers know that expanding NAFTA would be "nuts." the local's rank-and-file Political Action Committee, whose members are active in

HAOS moles

nce again, the Flight Attendants' trademarked CHAOS (Create Havoc Around Our System) campaign has paid off, this time with a tentative agreement at United Airlines. Originally designed to help win a contract at Alaska Airlines, CHAOS has become the AFA's way of drawing attention to its fight through intermittent work actions.

This year, AFA added a few new twists by launching balloons and banners declaring, "The Friendly Skies Turn

Stormy," during the Windy City's "Taste of Chicago," handing out CHAOS bag tags

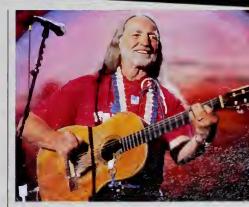
to departing passengers in Philadelphia, picketing and leafleting at Rockies games

in Denver and showing up in green CHAOS T-shirts during the televised Hawaiian Open.



ountry music star Willie Nelson is making himself at home with Overnite Transportation employees. He's the star of a new Teamsters' video "On the Road at Overnite," shown by organizers when making housecalls on Overnite workers.

Nelson volunteered his talent for the 11-minute video, and singer Aretha Franklin donated the use of her song "Respect." Nelson tells Overnite workers, "It's time to vote for the union," stressing that organizing into unions "is our right as Americans." The video also features interviews with 28 organized Overnite workers describing what life was like before the union, how far the company went in battling its employees and the gains they have made



since joining the union.

The two-year-old terminal-byterminal organizing drive has added 3,760 new members at 45 locations—about 42 percent of the eligible workers at Overnite, one of the largest nonunion carriers in the nation. To date, the union has won elections at 28 terminals and bargaining orders at 17 other locations.



CLOSING THE GAP: Lost year, the weekly earnings of union workers were 33 percent higher than those of nonunion workers---nearly \$8,000 on a yearly basis. Unions also norrow the wage gop for workers who face the most difficulty and discrimination in the labor market the union odvontoge was 38 percent for women, 42 percent for African Americans and 52 percent for Lotinos.

Unions Raise Wages

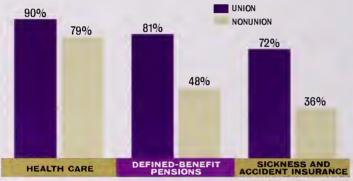
Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, 1996



CARING FOR OUR FAMILIES: At componies with more than 100 employees, nine of 10 union members are covered by health insurance through their jobs, compared to eight of 10 nonunion workers. More than eight of 10 union members are covered by "definedbenefit" pension plons (which provide o guoronteed income when you retire), compored to fewer than holf of nonunion workers. And more than two-thirds of union members—and only obout one-third of unorganized workers—have disability insurance.

More Union Workers Have Health and Pension Benefits

Percent of full-time employees covered by selected benefit programs in firms with more than 100 people, 1993



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

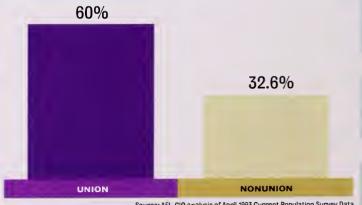
Facts and Figures on the Union Advantage

t a time when most working families are feeling economic stress, and many are losing their health care and retirement security, working Americans are showing a growing interest in forming or joining a union. But it's up to organizers to show what unions can do to help make life better for them and their families—in specific and tangible ways. Here are some facts and figures that illustrate how working together can make the future look brighter.

STAYING ON THE JOB: Union members work under the terms and conditions agreed to in collective borgoining. They have grievance procedures and a voice in workplace decisions. Compored to nonunion workers, they have better training, poy and benefits and more job security—measured by the number of years they stoy on their jobs. Union workers are neorly twice os likely to hove been in their current jobs for 10 or more years.

Union Workers Have Greater Job Security

Percent of workers with the same employer for 10 or more years



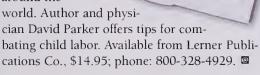
Source: AFL-CIO analysis of April 1993 Current Population Survey Data

The ABCs of Child Labor

Across the planet, 250 million children toil in difficult and often dangerous jobs. To raise awareness of the child labor crisis, book critic Melanie Marcus Greenberg, a member of the National Writers Union in Boston, recommends the following books for children:

- For three- to six-year olds, *Gathering the Sun* is a stunning Spanish/English alphabet book by Alma Flor Ada—dedicated to the memory of Cesar Chavez. Available from the publisher, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard (212-261-6500), for \$16.
- Readers ages six to eight will be enlightened by Holly Littlefield's *Fire at the Triangle Factory* (Carolrhoda Books, Inc., \$5.95 paper; \$13.95 hardcover; phone: 800-328-4929), based on the 1911 blaze at a New York shirtwaist company that killed 146 workers.
- For readers ages eight to 12, *Susie King Taylor: Destined to Be Free* (Just Us Books, \$5; phone: 201-672-7701) puts a spotlight on slavery from a child's perspective.
- For anyone over age 10, We Have Marched Together zooms in on the textile workers of Kensington, Penn.—from the formation of their union and the strike of 1903 to the resulting march of young "crusaders" led by media maven Mother Jones. Available from Lerner Publications Co., \$15.95;

phone: 800-328-4929.
• Also for readers age 10 and older, Stolen Dreams takes a close look at present-day child labor around the



Organizing Tunes for Little Ones

If you want your kids to understand what organizing is all about, get the new album by Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter (and Musicians Local 1000 President) John McCutcheon. Bigger Than Yourself (Rounder Records) features songs that get kids thinking about the value of collective action ("Stick Together"), organizing to confront power

("The Principle"), health and safety ("Safe at Home") and even permanent replacements in a tune about the babysitter ("Still the One for Me"). If you can't find the album at your local music store, it's available from the Labor Heritage Foundation at 202-842-7810.

Get on the School-to-Work Bus

Unions have the know-how in both the class-room and the workplace to support school-to-work programs. To find out more about these partnerships, get a copy of *Involving Unions in School-to-Work Initiatives: A Guide for School-to-Work Systems and Stakeholders* produced by the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute. Contact Sondra Lewsey, National Coordinator of School-to-Work at HRDI, 1101 14th St., N.W., Suite 320, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-638-3912; fax: 202-783-6536.

WHAT'S NEW

- Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize is a new 13-minute video designed to help unions change to build more effective organizing programs. A companion to the manual released earlier this year, the video includes highlights from job actions and interviews. It is available for \$7.50 from the AFL-CIO Broadcast Division, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; or fax an order to 202-508-6962.
- On Nov. 16–19, the AFL-CIO's National Safety and Health Conference in Cincinnati will bring together local and national union safety and health reps, organizers, rank-and-filers and union officers to learn about workplace safety problems and how to fix them. For information, call the AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health at 202-637-5367, or fax 202-508-6978.

UNION LINE

See Union in September

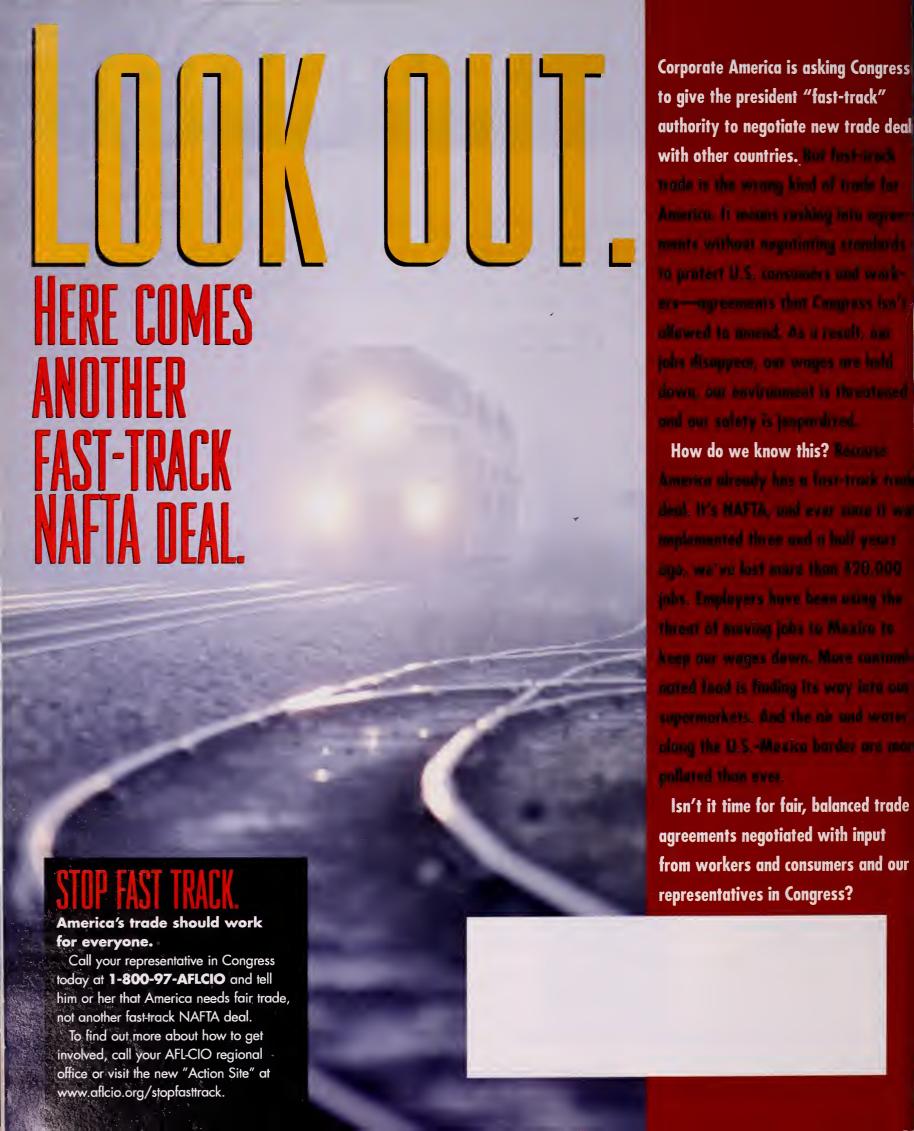
computers.)

As America's students tackle another school year, send them off with union-made school supplies. Here are some items to stash in those knapsacks:

- Dixon (formerly Crayola) Crayons and 3M and Scotch brand adhesive tape produced by OCAW members.
- Pratt and Lambert glues and adhesives and Paper Craft adhesive tape produced by UFCW members.
- From the Paperworkers, Duo Tang school and office products; Hammermill copy paper; Union Camp, NCR, Savon and Xerox printer paper; Rising (Fox River) ink pens and markers, mounting board and printer paper; and Mead notebook paper, sketch pads, tracing paper and index cards.
- Golden Books from Western Publishing, Sheaffer fountain and ball-point pens, and children's scissors from Wisco Industries made by UAW members.
- Bic ball-point pens, Dur-O-Lite mechanical pencils, Parker pens and pencils and National pencils produced by USWA members.

And if your back-to-school purchases

include a new home computer, you can find the union label on Pentium computers made in Chatsworth, Calif., at Union Friendly System—100 percent employee-owned by members of CWA—and Union Made Computers by the Electrical Workers. Members of the Electronics Workers and Electrical Workers also assemble Pentium and 486 computers for TCB Associates of Vienna, Va., under the Zenith Data Systems brand name. (Only Zenith products assembled by TCB are union





OCTOBER 1997

THE AFL-CIO CONVENTION CHARTS A NEW COURSE FOR THE FUTURE





you have a VOICE



make it. heard



HE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE . COUNTDOWN TO A STRIKE VICTORY . THE CONTRACTOR SCHEME



Ideas and Views From You

1

WHAT ABOUT PART-TIMERS?

Last month's "Say What?" asked what can be done to address the problems of part-time workers. Here are some thoughts from readers:

(a) "We really are now focusing on part-time workers, because of subcontracting of school buses. We're always threatened with the fear that schools would replace our members with subcontracted workers. School boards are always trying to shave costs, usually by going after custodians and drivers, which is our bag. We've been very successful in organizing these companies, helping to bring up the standards of these workers, not only in wages, but in benefits as well."—Liz Golembeski, vice president, Service Employees Local 200B

(a) "A loaf of bread costs the same whether you work full time or part time. We have had some successes in winning pro-rated benefits and leave accruals for part-timers, but the bottom line is that people need access to jobs that provide a decent standard of living. The best way to achieve that goal is to organize, and we are aggressively going after all workers—part time and full time."—Stanley Hornak, president, Civil Service Employees Association (New York State), AFSCME Local 1000

(a) "We have accepted the fact that part-time workers are a part of the hotel, restaurant and cafeteria industry. What we try to do through contract negotiations is extend all on-the-job protections and economic benefits as much as possible on a pro-rated basis to part-time workers."—Morty Miller, organizing director, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees

(a) "We have set up two provisions for our workers. If our members are working less than 40 hours, they are getting paid at time and a third. Second, most of our properties that use part-time or temporary workers have signed on to our union temporary company. The properties generally staff themselves with full-time temporary agency employees who are covered under the union contract."—John Boardman, HERE Local 25, Washington, D.C.

(a) "UPS was really exploiting its part-time workers. Many of our part-timers were working full time and getting part-time pay. People think it was a smokescreen issue, but it wasn't. That's what we struck for. The Teamsters has taken the fight head-on.

"The union did an outstanding job on the contract. By creating more full-time jobs out of part-time jobs, the union is helping full-time workers as well. Improved pensions means more drivers can retire, creating more full-time jobs."—Gaylord Phillips, Teamsters Local 386, Modesto, Calif.

WORKING WOMEN, READY TO ACT

When you see
unions@work
and our

members@work

and collective power
in our
communities@work,

that's when you see

We have board of the Working women, when in Strain working I still have goose bumps from the Working Women, working Together conference....I have been to more conferences than I can count, and this was by far the most meaningful and inspiring I have attended. There were five women from Syracuse at our conference. Each of us has been uplifted and energized by the incredible speakers and the overwhelming sense of sisterhood generated at this event.

"We have heard the call and we are ready to act. We intend to mobilize, strategize and organize, starting right now. We will share everything we learned with the Central New York Working Women's Coalition, and we will take our message to the streets. We are also brainstorming ideas to raise money so we can send as many sisters as possible to the conference next year. Every working woman in America deserves the opportunity to experience what we experienced."—Stephanie Walker, field coordinator, Greater Syracuse Labor Council

WHAT IS YOUR UNION DOING TO PREVENT MISCLASSIFICATION OF WORKERS AND TO ORGANIZE "CONTINGENT" WORKERS?

America@work

America@work

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The Teamsters' strike at UPS lasted only two weeks—but the campaign to mobilize members and educate the public was nearly two years in the making

THE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR CRAZE Growing numbers of workers are being

pushed off the payroll and into "independent contractor" arrangements. Are they really their own bosses—or is this another scheme for paying workers less?

ANYPLACE BUT
THE WORKPLACE
In America, we can speak, vote and congregate freely—unless it's

In America, we can speak, vote and congregate freely—unless it's on the job. What can be done to restore the right to organize and bring America's values back to work?

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Sife Fills

The Doctor Is In the Union

ome 5,000 doctors in California are wearing the union label after the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD) voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with AFSCME.

In announcing the Aug. 27 vote, UAPD President Robert Weinmann said the union now plans to begin a national organizing campaign of doctors in an age of "mangled" managed care. UAPD's members are concerned about the loss of control by doctors over medical decisions as the number of health maintenance organizations increases. "Patients become profits—that's the new name of the game," says Weinmann, a San Jose neurologist.

"Health care professionals all over this country, including doctors and dentists, are gaining a new voice in the exam room, in the operating room and in the board room by organizing with labor unions," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee.

2,000 salaried doctors who work in state prisons, county hospitals and other public institutions. The union handles contract negotiations for its members who are salaried employees. It also operates a non-

profit independent

UAPD represents 3,000 doctors in private practice and

Big

BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

Airways

n the biggest privatesector organizing election in a decade, nearly 10,000 gate agents, ticket sellers and reservations takers at US Airways voted to join the Communications Workers.

In the election, a rerun ordered by the National Mediation Board after it said that the company illegally interfered in an earlier campaign, 4,733 workers (54 percent) at 110 airports and reservation centers voted for CWA.

"CWA is exactly the right union for passenger service professionals, because it already represents 130,000 employees doing this kind of work," says CWA President Morton Bahr.

"Winning a voice was our biggest issue," according to Josie Esposito, a San Diego reservations agent and the first US Airways employee to contact CWA nearly three years ago. "People are finally waking up to the fact that they need protection and that

they need protection and that means a union."

Hello, CWA: US A ways workers Jo

Esposito, Jeff Dev

Tim Yost and Mar

The organizing started from the ground up, with workers setting up committees at each site and building support for CWA. Hundreds of gate, ticket and reservations agents and club representatives were involved in the grassroots effort, working as much as they could, conducting weekly conference calls, writing and distributing newsletters and traveling to other airports and reservation centers to spread the word that corporate profits were up and salaries were down.

On average, a passenger service employee lost \$22,000 in salary and benefits over the past four years, says Tim Yost, a Pittsburgh gate agent. "We lost our pensions, we gave up cost-of-living raises, our wages had been frozen, and we lost holiday and vacation days.

"But at the same time, executives, top management and other employee groups continued to receive annual cost-of-living raises, kept their pension plans and continued to receive holiday and vacation pay. That's why we knew we needed CWA representation," Yost says.

Passenger service professionals at other airlines have expressed interest in CWA representation, citing the gains CWA has made for other customer service professionals, according to Bahr.

Electrifying NEWS

coalition of labor, industry, rural, senior citizen and consumer groups that includes the AFL-CIO is warning that while "customer choice" may sound good, electric utility restructuring could carry a high price for workers, small consumers and the environment.

Energy conglomerates and large industrial users, which would profit from deregulation, are pushing restructuring in state legislatures and Congress. The coalition is challenging them nationally and state by state, and has identified 10 major issues that must be addressed in any state or federal electric utility restructuring legislation: reliability, consumer costs, universal

tion: reliability, consumer costs, universal access, societal impacts, tax revenues, safety, the environment, stranded workers, stranded costs and mergers and market dominance.

Seven bills are before Congress, and at least two more are being drafted, covering

electric utility restructuring and "retail wheeling" (the ability of individual consumers to buy electricity from competing companies).

Many utility companies are preparing for deregulation by cutting workers' jobs and deferring maintenance. Under deregulation, suppliers would be able to shift rates. Larger users are expected to get reduced costs, while residential and small commercial users may have to absorb higher costs, the coalition says.

Electric utility deregulation laws have been passed in

Maine, California and Pennsylvania; are being considered in Connecticut, Michigan, Ohio, Wyoming and Michigan; and are on a fast track in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New York. In Pennsylvania, the Utility Workers, four UWUA locals and six individuals have filed suit, challenging the Electric Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act and charging violations of the state's constitution.



They Said It

he Labor-HHS bill is not a Republican message," Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK) said just before the House began its debate on the \$269 billion spending bill. Both the House and Senate versions were approved on the committee level, with bipartisan support and without the kind of anti-worker riders championed by the GOP two years ago that led to vetoes and a government shutdown.

But in mid-September, conservatives offered several amendments to slash funds from the enforcement activities of the National Labor Relations Board, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. All failed. Other expected conservative amendments to deny minimum wage and other labor protections to workfare workers, privatize certain public assistance programs and expand the definition of independent contractors—denying workers protection of most labor laws, including pension and health benefits and workers' compensation—did not materialize. House and Senate versions were in conference in mid-October.

Both the TEAM Act and legislation allowing employers to substitute comp time for overtime pay may reach the floorvote stage before Congress adjourns sometime in early November.

On the Senate's first day back from its summer recess, a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing showed that some lawmakers may have spent too much time in the sun. The hearing on "union violence" was loaded with anti-union witnesses, including Ed Meese, Reagan Administration attorney general, head of the National Right to Work Committee and turncoat former Teamsters official. The show trials go on.

SEASONING APPRENTICES

wo major tasks of every local union are organizing and training. In Indiana, Sheet Metal Workers Local 20 has merged the two in a way that enhances both.

Since 1989, the local has bolstered its organizing program by requiring that all third-year apprentices take a six-month break from their formal training and help organize new members by salting into nonunion workforces. Michael Van Gordon, the local's organizing director, says the local grew by 35 percent from 1984 to 1994, with most of the growth coming in the past five years.

In the 5,500-member local's Youth-to-Youth program, apprentices apply for work at nonunion shops so that they can explain the benefits of working union to their new co-workers. The most recent group of apprentices, Van Gordon says, filled out 1,780 job applications with 279 nonunion employers across the state, resulting in 63 salts and two election petitions filed with the National Labor Relations Board. In addition, Van Gordon says, the local has more than 350 active unfair-labor-practice charges before the NLRB.

Each group of apprentices

gets intense five-day training that uses parts of the Construction Organizing Membership Education and Training (COMET) program, with details on salting in, worker rights and how to file unfairlabor-practice charges. More than 650 apprentices have gone through the program, says Van Gordon.

Local 20's Jay Potesta, the business manager and financial secretary-treasurer, praises the program's effectiveness throughout the state. In areas that haven't seen membership growth, he says, the program has prevented membership declines.

SPOTLIGHT

CAREGIVERS AND PATIENTS UNITE AROUND A COMMON CAUSE

Surrise was considered the premier hospital in Nevada before Columbia/HCA came to town. But ever since the nation's largest health care chain bought the Las Vegas hospital in 1993, chronic understaffing has lowered standards of patient care. So as the hospital's 2,000 workers step up their drive for a union to give them a voice on the job, the Las Vegas community is publicly demanding quality health care. "They are deeply concerned with the current unsafe conditions, rising workloads and their effect on the quality of care," says Pat Walthour, RN.

For the past 10 years, Columbia/HCA has been gobbling up community hospitals and then cutting staff and services to finance further expansion. That

expansion recently came to a halt, at least temporarily, when the FBI and other federal agents raided Columbia hospitals in seven states, seizing truckloads of documents and making Columbia the subject of the largest medical fraud investigation in history.

This fall, a labor-community campaign will make a joint demand that Columbia/HCA suspend plans for new facilities, restore quality patient care by

respecting workers' call for a union and add a real community voice to the hospital board of trustees. Ten thousand signatures will be collected and delivered to top Sunrise executives just before Sunrise workers ask the hospital for card-check recognition.

The labor-community alliance already has shown what it can do: Columbia was forced to withdraw its attempt to capture a health care monopoly in Nevada after hundreds of people testified and sent letters of protest. "Despite all the juice and big money Columbia brought, we stopped them in their tracks," says Adair Damman, SEIU campaign director.

Sunrise workers have spoken to labor unions, community groups, health advocacy organizations, reporters, clergy members and physicians. Patient

care reports published by SEIU have documented how Columbia has lowered standards since acquiring the hospital—and how a union can help raise them again. "All the patients that come walking through the door at Sunrise deserve the best quality care that we can give them," says Debbie Mendoza, a maternity nurse. "And that's why we're mobilizing the community and forming a union."



DAVID BACON

Einerrub

Safeway Backs Strawberry Workers

Sept. 15 to support 20,000 strawberry pickers in California. This is the first time in more than 30 years that Safeway and the union have worked together on issues of concern to agricultural workers.

The announcement means that 27 retail food companies, including such conglomerates as Ralph's, A&P and American Stores, covering 4,630 stores in 41 states and four Canadian provinces, have signed pledges backing rights for strawberry workers.

UFW President Arturo Rodriguez says the pledge "is another sign that change is coming to California strawberry fields. Safeway's support for what are basic human rights for some of the poorest workers in our country deserves the community's acclamation and gratitude."



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

arpenters at the Laughlin, Nev., Circus Circus hotel were up against a hard place. Nine of the 10 staff carpenters voted to join the Carpenters and were summarily fired. They called in the cavalry—in this case, 200 Las Vegas Carpenters, who came in and joined 400 members of Local 897 to form what UBC organizer Frank Hawk says was the largest rally in the city's history.

It wasn't until the reinforcements arrived that management offered to give the fired workers back their jobs and agreed to bargain.

"This is a symbolic victory for this area, where none of the casinos have allowed unions until now," says Hawk. "There are 12,000 casino employees who are closely watching what we are doing, and we have been hearing from many of them. They are all looking for guidance."

ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

AFSCME District Council 1199J scored two wins in Newark, N.J., recently. The 150 LPNs, recreational aides and dietary and housekeeping staff at the Pope John Paul II Pavilion of St. James Hospital voted for AFSCME 1199J representation, and 550 service and maintenance workers at Lincoln Park Nursing Home voted to form a bargaining unit.



BTOP Since kicking off in January, the Building Trades Organizing Project (BTOP) has organized more than 2,000 new members in Las Vegas. One tactic used to increase membership is the "help wanted" handbill, seeking "experienced craft workers to work for union contractors on some of the

Strip's largest and most prestigious projects." Not only did the handbill bring in additional help, but a majority of workers at several nonunion contractors signed union cards.

CAW Raise your cups—coffee, that is—to 110 workers at eight Vancouver, B.C., Starbucks coffee bars and one distribution center who ratified their first contract last month. They voted for Canadian Auto Workers representation this summer and are the first in the 1,100-store chain to be unionized.

CWA/GUILD Health care professionals at the University of California's five medical centers voted by a two-to-one margin in late August to join the Communications Workers. The clinical lab technologists, pharmacists, nuclear medicine technicians, psychologists and clinical social workers are employed at UC's teaching hospitals in San Francisco, Davis, San Diego, Los Angeles and Irvine. The University Professional and Technical Employees

CWA Local 9119 has a drive under way for another unit of 8,000 UC employees. Editorial employees at Lerner Community Newspapers in Skokie, Ill., voted to join the Newspaper Guild/CWA Local 71, Chicago Newspaper Guild. Lerner publishes several weekly newspapers, covering northern Chicago and its suburbs.

FISHERMEN The Alaskan Fishermen's Union reeled in more than 275 new members when employees of four Alaska fish-observing companies voted for representation by the Seafarers affiliate. The observers are biologists who monitor the size, health and trends of the fish stocks and provide that information to the National Marine Fisheries Service. The win followed a 10-month organizing campaign, union President Mark Coles says.

MINE WORKERS More than 150 skilled, production and maintenance workers at Shelby Die Casting in Fayette, Ala., celebrated Labor Day as new members of the

Mine Workers after voting Aug. 28 for union representation. The workers cast parts for companies such as General Electric and Cub Cadet.

SEIU A majority of registered nurses and other health professionals employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania voted to leave the unaffiliated Pennsylvania Nurses Association and to join District 1199P of the Service Employees. The more than 2,000 nurses work in a statewide system of hospitals, mental retardation centers, correctional facilities, veterans' centers and community health centers. SEIU Local 205T won its third straight organizing victory, bringing to 300 the number of new members gained since the local decided earlier this year to devote 27 percent of its budget to organizing. The latest win came when research assistants at Meharry Medical College in Nashville voted "Union Yes" Aug. 29. The local reports that Meharry spent about \$3,000 per employee in union-busting efforts to keep the workers from casting union ballots.

Let's Get

Ts no surprise that far too many elected officials don't understand or represent the interests of working families, favoring instead corporate interests. After all, in the U.S. House of Representatives, 181 members are bankers and businesspeople; 172 are lawyers. State legislatures, county boards and city councils are similarly composed.

But the AFL-CIO is launching a drive to help reshape the face of government. Called "2000 in 2000," the project's goal is to encourage 2,000 union members to run for political office in the millennium elections. Last spring, the Political Department began searching for union members who hold elected or appointed office. That search has turned up more than 1,000, and names keep coming in.

The union members who hold office will come together Nov. 7-9 in Washington, D.C., for a three-day conference. Karen Ackerman, Political Department assistant director, says one of the major goals of the conference will be to show "how to promote organizing through the

local government.'

Important policies are set below the federal level on welfare, public sector pensions, prevailing wages, job safety, safe streets and schools. Union members who hold state or local office can help make sure working families don't get the short end of those sticks, Ackerman says.

The conference also will be the first step in encouraging these leaders to move up to higher office and, at the same time, showing them how to

bring along other union members to fill their spots. "We need more elected officials who represent and understand the issues that working men and women face each day," says AFL-CIO

For more information about the conference, call 1-888-3AFL-CIO. President John Sweeney.

Solidarity Forever

he AFL-CIO has launched the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (the Solidarity Center) to provide new support and hands-on assistance to workers abroad, helping them build strong unions and challenge repression and injustice. The center consolidates the AFL-CIO's international institutes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, and is jointly funded by the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy.

The center will work directly with organizations such as the ILO and the ICFTU to offer the assistance unions need in organizing, collective bargaining, communications and other areas in

order to become strong, selfsustaining organizations. The Solidarity Center places a special emphasis on developing global strategies that enable workers to represent themselves powerfully.

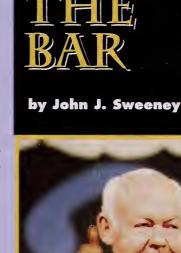
The Solidarity Center also will work with labor activists and nongovernmental organizations to monitor violations of workers' rights and help indigenous unions build the capacity to monitor those violations themselves. Reporting and remedying these violations often require expertise and experience never before available to many unions around the



OUT FRONT

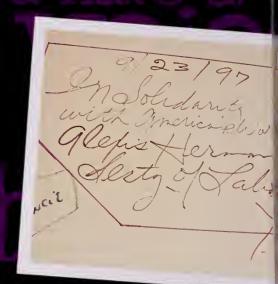
e have a voice and we're making it With new energy, new dedication and new resources, our labor movement has created a vibrant culture of organizing. And we're seeing the results: with more than 2,000 recent organizing wins, our membership numbers are beginning to creep back up. But each of us must raise the bar even higher and set new standards and goals.

- We have to continue to change to organize. But that's not enough. We must find ways to organize on a bigger scale and at a faster pace because the employers we are confronting are raising the stakes by spending millions of new dollars to deny workers their legal right to organize.
- Nearly 40 percent of our own members are not registered to
- vote, and we need a massive effort to build workers' political clout so they can gain control of their lives and futures. First we must register 4 million new union family voters by the year 2000. But that's not enough. We've got to reach even higher by encouraging our members to stand for public office themselves. And for all candidates we must administer a new litmus test: Will they vote to support workers' right to organize to improve their lives?
- It's not good enough to keep new members pouring in while union jobs are pouring out of the country. We've got to derail "fast track." But that's not enough either. We have to work harder and closer with our brothers and sisters in other unions, in other nations, to organize workers in the cruel new global economy.
- We must organize our money, too, fusing our financial resources for greater bargaining strength. But that's not enough, because multinational corporations have more money than we have. So we must build new solidarity globally and here at home so that our unions work together more often and more powerfully and with community support to organize and bargain.
- And finally, with all we've accomplished over the past two years, we haven't done enough to make the face of our leadership reflect the faces of our membership and of America's new workforce. We need a renewed effort to bring more women and minorities into the leadership of our movement at every level. Because it isn't enough to say we value diversity and inclusiveness—let's leave lip-service and hypocrisy to our foes. We have to live our values.



CONVENTION '97

MAKING ANEW YOICE HEARD



The message was bold and bright and everywhere:
You have a voice. Make it heard.

And delegates to the Twenty-Second Biennial AFL-CIO Convention *did* make their voices heard Sept. 22–25 in Pittsburgh, committing America's labor movement to breakthrough efforts to give working people more say on the job, in the economy, in government and in their communities.

The delegates pledged new energy and resources to organizing to revitalize the labor movement. They endorsed new ways to make workers' political and legislative voices heard, and shared efforts to reach out beyond racial and ethnic boundaries to give all workers social justice. They discovered new tools for fighting corporate greed, gaining economic power for working families and closing the gap between the rich and the poor.

"When we last met in convention," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who along with Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson was re-elected to a four-year term, "it seemed that our movement was losing more than membership strength, political battles and public esteem. We were in danger of losing our faith in ourselves.

"We told ourselves—and we told the world—that we would begin rebuilding our membership and creating a strong, new voice for America's working families, worker by worker, workplace by workplace, industry by industry.

"For the past two years we've been doing just that."

The convention was an opportunity to celebrate wins
together, through formal recognitions at the dais as well

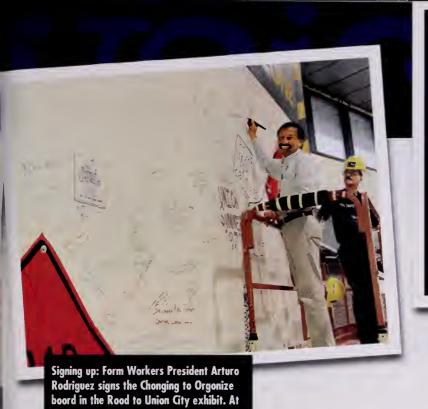
together, through formal recognitions at the dais as well as plain-fun get-togethers. Delegates, Pittsburgh-area union members and community allies took to the streets for a Sunday evening block party outside the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. They enjoyed a You Have a Voice rock concert with Billy Bragg, Tish Hinojosa, Toshi Reagon and the Bones of Contention, and savored drinks, dinner and dancing on an evening riverboat cruise, courtesy of the Steelworkers.

FOUNDING CONVENTION
OF THE CIO
Near here on Nov. 14.
Signature of Industrial Organ.
Of In



A taste of Pittsburgh: Grabbing a bite at the block party (above); Convention Hall

(below); marking labor history (bottom



"It is fitting that we've come home to Pittsburgh—where working Americans have made so much steel and so much history," said Sweeney. And Pittsburgh provided plenty of history, with ceremonies hosted by the local labor community at the sites of the 1877 railroad strike, the founding convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the founding of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions and the Battle of Homestead, where strikers faced the Pinkertons in 1892.

left, Secretory Alexis Hermon's signoture

The convention also was an opportunity to gain new skills. Preconvention conferences focused on organizing, the roles state federations and central labor councils play in organizing and in the successes and goals of the Union Cities program, building a political voice for workers and ensuring effective stewardship of workers' pensions funds. Exploring new tools for labor activists was a hands-on experience in the Road to Union City exhibit, with interactive displays and activities on new Federation programs from Changing to Organize to Street Heat mobilization and Common Sense Economics.

In his keynote address, Sweeney outlined the tough job ahead, urging labor to continue to "raise the bar," creating and meeting higher expectations for organizing, political and legislative strength, protecting workers rights worldwide and making the economy work for working families.

"We will continue to talk together about how we can all change faster than we think we can change, and reach higher than we think we can reach and do more than we think we can do," he said.





"E

verything we do is connected to organizing," Sweeney told delegates in his keynote speech during the first day of the AFL-CIO's biennial convention.

He spoke from a stage crowded with more than 60 newly organized workers, who were cheered by delegates and celebrated during preconvention events, including a meeting with Vice President Al Gore. "The real heroes of the labor movement," Sweeney said, "are the thousands of

workers...who decided to put their jobs on the line and their lives on hold to help their co-workers win the dignity, rights and respect that come with a union contract."

Building a movement of America's workers—the opening-day theme—means new organizing "that will require a massive shift of union resources, strategic planning, the development of new skills and organizing talent, and membership education and mobilization," SEIU President Andy Stern said.

That afternoon, the convention unanimously approved a resolution calling for a dramatic boost from all unions in organizing resources—with a goal of \$1 billion a year by 2000. Through the resolution, the labor movement committed to step up recruitment and training

of organizers, lead organizers and strategic researchers; to increase support of large-scale organizing aimed at big corporate employers; and to increase the strength of unions in entire industries or regions. Delegates agreed that the right to organize should rank with the rights to free speech and free assembly as a basic civil right—and should become the civil rights issue of the coming decade.

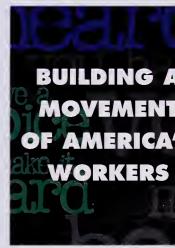
The resolution pledges the Federation's financial and technical help to strategic organizing campaigns through its \$10 million organizing fund and the use of the AFL-CIO's organizing, legal, strategic research and public affairs resources.

Speaking from the convention floor, Beverly Campbell related a too-common organizing story of employer threats, firings and discrimination, which the workers at Chamness Square Nursing Home in Kankakee County, Ill., endured for two years before they were able to hold an election and win AFSCME representation. Six months of delaying and stalling by the company then roadblocked negotiations.

"But just as we had done in our union organizing campaign, we started organizing again," Campbell told the roaring delegates. "And this time we went to the community, the parents and the guardians of our clients as well as the religious leaders and community leaders...We finally ratified our first contract...on June 1."

Delegates got a good preview of future organizing efforts directed at entire industries when they saluted the dedicated men and women

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID RENTZ/VPI; BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE (2), DAVID RENTZ/VPI



struggling in Watsonville, Calif., to win Farm Workers representation for strawberry workers.

Candelaria Llanas, Ignacio Alego and Jose
Luis Santillan (who had been fired for his
union activities) told delegates that strawberry workers often endured
sexual harassment and abuse, awful living conditions and lack of drinking
water or bathroom facilities in the fields. When the workers win their
struggle to organize, they said, these conditions can be overcome.

The trio was brought on stage to present actor Martin Sheen (who was unable to appear) and Ralph's chief executive Ron Burkle with Murray-Green-Meany-Kirkland awards for humanitarian service in recognition of their support of the strawberry workers.

Unions are the key to ensuring workers' dignity, fair wages and respect from employers. But "the sad fact is that most working Americans don't know...and that's bad news for organizing," UFCW President Doug Dority told the convention when he introduced the AFL-CIO's new media and community outreach program (see Sept. 1997 issue).

"For too long we just haven't been telling our story. We haven't worked hard enough at helping workers understand unions," he said.

Now, the pilot project to reposition unions—four television commercials with union members talking about their work and their unions—is under way in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Seattle, St. Louis and San Antonio. The AFL-CIO worked with local unions in those cities to connect the ads with local organizing and community outreach.

It's working. Workers are walking into central labor councils and calling unions, asking how to organize, and other organizing leads are increasing in the test markets as well. Polls in Seattle and Milwaukee, the first two cities tested, show that positive attitudes toward unions increased 12 percentage points, from 35 to 47 percent. After the ads ran, 52 percent of nonunion workers said they would vote union, compared to 44 percent before the campaign began.

The success of the pilot project led the Executive Council to recommend a \$40 million "Today's Unions" Media Fund to mount an aggressive, expanded media campaign during the next two years. The council will examine a specific proposal for the fund in January.

Delegates also recognized the organizing help from Union Summer interns and Senior Summer volunteers. More than 2,000 mostly young activists joined Union Summer in the past two years, Sweeney said, and several hundred seniors signed up for Senior Summer this year.

Paula Freedman, retired after 32 years in the New York City public school system, told the convention that she had begun "to have a nagging feeling of not being needed." But she joined dozens of retired union members in Bergen County, N.J., to fight the corporate takeover of Bergen Pines, a public hospital that provides "health care not only for the poorest of the poor, but all those in need of its unique services."

The volunteers joined forces with hospital workers and Union Summer activists to leaflet supermarkets and nursing homes, spoke up at town meetings and gathered signatures on petitions to keep the hospital public. "The struggle for Bergen Pines still goes on," she said.

During a busy first day, the convention—which was opened by SEIU Local 585's Rosemary Trump, with welcomes from Pennsylvania State AFL-CIO President Bill George, Allegheny County Labor Council President Paul Stackhouse and Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy—also called for major political campaign finance reform, including a ban on "soft money" donations and public financing of elections, and heard from U.S. Sens. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.).

LEFT TO RIGHT. BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE (3)



he photos behind House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt showed dilapidated, packing-crate shacks in front of gleaming post-NAFTA factories—where most of the crate-dwellers work for 70 cents an hour—and raw sewage floating in open ditches through the shanty town along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Gephardt held up a final photo for the AFL-CIO convention delegates; it showed a little girl from the village. "The children that were in

this village were beautiful children, as all children are," he said. "And as we left, I looked in her face. And I realized that this little girl is our little girl. She is us."

If presidential fast-track authority for negotiating trade deals is passed without strong and enforceable labor and environmental protections, Gephardt warned, the NAFTA-created horror along the border is just a preview of "a race to the bottom—not only in the world—but here."

Gephardt's indictment of fast track and his defense of workers' right to organize and union members' right to take part in politics won rousing support from delegates on Tuesday, when the convention focused on the theme of "Making Government Work for Working Families" and honored labor's political activists.

Political power comes from two sources—money and people, said AFSCME President Gerald McEntee.

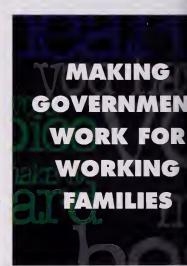
"In the last election, corporations made \$700 million in political contributions. They outspent labor by 17 to one. But we are beginning to win the war for people."

People power is one of the key weapons in the fast-track battle—and Sharon Porter and other union activists are using it.

"We know that the best people to put heat on politicians and hold them accountable are local union members," said Porter, a machine operator with UNITE Local 590 in Bellaire, Ohio, where she is secretary of the local labor council and serves as issues mobilization coordinator for the district represented by Rep. Bob Ney (R). "We visited with Congressman Ney and explained our position. It was all very polite but we made him nervous. And that's exactly what needs to happen. We must hold lawmakers accountable or they will ignore the concerns of working people. If that makes them nervous, so be it," she said.

Apparently the visit worked. Porter told the convention she'd gotten word that morning that Ney would vote no on fast track.

Delegates on Tucsday endorsed the AFL-CIO's new National Issues Mobilization for grassroots legislative activism, plus a new drive to register working families to vote, coalition-building with allies to support candidates who back working family issues, the new National Labor





Political Center to train political activists and the effort to get union members elected to public office. A day later, delegates approved funding for the new efforts—a five-cent increase (three cents in 1998 and two in 1999) in the per capita tax to establish a Membership Mobilization and Education Fund for next year's political and legislative action.

In the Road to Union City exhibit, the Union City Power Plant—designed to develop and showcase labor's legislative and political strength—was the biggest hit. The delegates e-mailed and faxed messages to Congress, completed anti–fast track postcards, checked a database to see how many union members in their congressional districts are registered to vote and signed up to be part of Labor '98.

Another popular site in the exhibit was P.S. 97—a "schoolroom" for learning about Common Sense Economics. Labor Secretary Alexis Herman summed up the thinking behind the AFL-CIO's new Common Sense Economics project: In this booming economy, she said, "if profits are rising and paychecks aren't, something is out of whack."

Many workers know that something is indeed out of whack, but, said Steelworkers President George Becker in introducing the Common Sense Economics program to the convention, "Too many have been persuaded...that the blame belongs anywhere except on the corporations and banks. Few tasks are as important as providing our members with a framework through which they can view the political and economic world," Becker said. "We're offering them a way to understand—at a minimum—two things: One, that they as individuals are not to blame, and two, that there is an alternative, and that alternative can be found in collective action through their trade unions."

The Common Sense Economics project provides local unions, joint councils, central labor councils and state feds with training and materials to help members understand how and why the economy is tilted to benefit the wealthy and what working people can do to fight back.

Working women are an important part of that fight. Reshaping the economy for fairness requires addressing concerns about equal pay, about juggling work and family responsibilities, about decent child care and about the right to a voice in the workplace. Two major recent AFL-CIO surveys of working women showed that women are ready for collective action on paycheck economics.

"They were unequivocal," Gloria Johnson, AFL-CIO vice president and Coalition of Labor Union Women president, told the delegates. "Four out of five women said it's better to work together to solve problems on the job."

Out of the September Working Women's conference came new ideas to address the problems working women face, including "a national grassroots campaign for equal pay," announced by AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "We will hold Equal Pay Days around the country next April," she said. "We'll file lawsuits; we'll hold bad companies accountable; and we'll step up organizing."

The convention also lauded the work of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, passed resolutions honoring AFL-CIO past presidents Thomas Donahue and Lane Kirkland and heard from Elisa Sanchez, president of the national Latina organization MANA.

resident Clinton received loud cheers when he told the AFL-CIO Convention, "I have vetoed every piece of anti-labor legislation that has crossed my desk, and I will continue to do so." But later in his Wednesday morning speech, he defended his call for fast-track authority in negotiating international trade deals and was greeted with silence, sprinkled with a smattering of "No Fast Track" calls from conventioneers.

The president acknowledged that labor and the White House "don't see eye-to-eye" on fast track, but told delegates, "We share too many values and priorities to let this disagreement damage our friendship."

After Clinton's appearance, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the president's rather lengthy defense of his trade policy was "an eloquent expression of one point of view, but we believe that America should use its tremendous power in the world economy to lead a race to the top—not the bottom—and negotiate fair trade policies that protect the environment and human and workers' rights....We want the world to know how strongly we oppose NAFTA and fast track."

During a day centered on the theme "A New Voice for Workers in the Global Economy," convention delegates rose from their seats and marched through the aisles of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, waving signs reading, "Fair Trade Not Fast Track," and, "Fast Track Railroads Working Families." They then unanimously approved a resolution reaffirming labor's opposition to fast track and noting the harmful record of NAFTA.

Through the global economy resolution,



A NEW VOICE

FOR WORKER

IN THE

GLOBAL

ECONOM

Men (and Women) in Brown: Teomsters President Ron Carey and victorious strikers

delegates also condemned China's repres-

sion of human and workers' rights and demanded that U.S. trade policies reflect concern for living standards, workers' rights and the environment.

The convention celebrated worldwide labor solidarity, recognizing 100 trade union leaders from 43 countries and hearing from Bob White, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Margaret Prosser of Britain's Transport and General Workers Union.

Electronic Workers President Ed Fire said worldwide solidarity played a big part in the successful negotiations between GE—"the richest corporation on the face of the earth"—and the 14-union Coordinated Bargaining Committee.

"With the help of the AFL-CIO, GE workers from Brazil, Chile and Canada sat with us at the bargaining table. The International Metal Workers Federation gave us its full support as well. We won a breakthrough contract with GE. But we know our international efforts just scratched the surface."

GE workers from four countries then told the convention of problems they face around the world. Miriam Majola of South Africa drew a vivid picture of black workers who make \$3 an hour—\$2 an hour less than white workers at the GE plant—and face threats by the company to move the plant because, she said, "We make too much money."

Delegates also cheered domestic bargaining victories and honored strikers Wednesday. To the hip-hop beats of "Men in Brown," an adaption of this summer's popular theme for the movie "Men in Black," 100 UPS workers—men and women—decked out in their familiar brown uniforms marched through the hall and to the stage before being saluted by Teamsters President Ron Carey.

Strikers from the Frontier Hotel—members of HERE, the Teamsters, the Operating Engineers and the Carpenters—won applause for their six-year battle with the hotel, during which not one striker has crossed the picket line. The strikers heard from Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka that former Sen. Howard Metzenbaum will lead a special committee being formed to investigate the hotel's "lawlessness and its suitability to hold a gaming license" during the longest-running strike in modern history.

Delegates also honored two SEIU members who had been among the hundreds illegally discharged during a strike against Beverly Enterprises in Pennsylvania and then reinstated, and endorsed a resolution praising the contributions to the labor movement of the late Albert Shanker, former AFT president.

U.S. workers have an underused but powerful tool for steering corporate policy to the "high road," delegates learned: their pension funds own 30 percent of the country's financial assets and a quarter of the stock of publicly traded U.S. companies.

"Our capital should work for us, not against us," Trumka said, introducing the new Center for Working Capital. The center, a separate nonprofit organization, will help pension fund trustees—through training, research and technical and legal support—make sure that pension funds are managed in ways that safeguard retirement plans, provide long-term value and support high-road corporate strategies that provide good jobs at good wages.

PHOTOS-BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE (4)



Il week, delegates entered the convention hall on the Road to Union City through an interactive exhibit area. On Thursday, they endorsed Union Cities and several other new AFL-CIO initiatives to build "A New Voice for Workers in Our Communities."

"Across the country, we intend to build Union Cities," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said, "where there is a renaissance of new organizing, where union members can be energized and mobilized, where

workers' families have political clout and a strong voice that can be heard."

Less than six months after the Union Cities campaign was launched, 105 central labor councils—in 41 states, representing 6.5 million workers—have taken the Union Cities pledge.

"How will we know when we have arrived at Union City?" asked Amy Dean, chair of the AFL-CIO Advisory Committee on CLCs. "In a Union City, local unions turn out their members to support each other on the picket lines. Elected officials have a zero-tolerance policy for union busting. Employers who dare to challenge an employee's right to organize are confronted by the outrage of an entire community."

Street Heat—mobilizing members around organizing and struggles for economic and social justice—is a key component of Union Cities. And it worked in Seattle for 15 Musicians at the Fifth Avenue Theater, who found themselves replaced and up against the same union-busting law firm that represented Frank Lorenzo when he tore up Eastern Airlines.

"Trade unionists and supporters mobilized. They hit the streets of Seattle with five actions in six days. Over 4,000 activists in the streets dramatically raised the profile of those 15 workers," related Ron Judd, executive secretary-treasurer of the King County Labor Council.

The theater's anti-union campaign col-

lapsed, and the Musicians are back at work with a decent contract.

A NEW VOIC

FOR

WORKERS

IN OUR

COMMUNITIE

In Georgia—where public employees don't have the right to organize—the Atlanta Labor Council's commitment to Union Cities and its twin



NAACP President Kweisi Mfume: "We have stood together, marched together, sat-in together, struggled together....Now it's time...to win together"



Employees "build for a time

when we can demand bargaining rights and negotiate," said Tyrone Freeman, executive director of SEIU Local 1985.

One of her first actions, said Bridgette Williams, newly elected president of the Kansas City (Mo.) CLC, "was to embrace the core strategies of Union Cities. Very quickly our union began to reap the benefits. Once dormant and fractured, we have begun to build a mobilization network and activist base to support our local unions and create an environment for successful organizing.'

Delegates' enthusiasm got a boost from passionate calls for organizing and worker empowerment from Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"We need labor law reform, to make corporations play fair when it comes to union elections," Jackson said. "Workers must be free to organize...with free elections without corporate interference. And workers must have—and use—the right to strike.

"Because the union movement built America's middle class, even unorganized workers—even management—even corporate barracudas have benefitted from labor's victories," Jackson said.

"When the economy enters a crisis, workers are always asked to share the pain. When the stock market hits 8,000, workers should also get to share in the gain."

Kennedy noted that labor and environmental

protections must be written into trade agreements, as business rights are now: "No worker should be treated with less dignity than a compact disk."

He also blasted congressional Republicans for their anti-worker initiatives. He called the TEAM Act "a travesty. The Republicans' idea of teamwork is to set up fake unions in the workplace-company-dominated unions—to prevent real unions from being formed."

So-called OSHA reform, Kennedy said, "exempts employers from inspections, requires workers to notify management whenever they complain about safety problems, slashes penalties on business for safety and health

Delegates passed a "Safe Jobs in a Safe World" resolution, vowing to fight safety rollbacks, press for stronger health and safety measures and extend OSHA coverage to some 7 million state and local employees currently excluded.

violations.

"Community" means more than the area in which we live. "Community" also means the global community of workers, in which we are linked by common threads that cross geographic, racial, ethnic and cultural divides. Making their voice heard on behalf of this community, delegates passed a human and civil rights resolution pledging to defend affirmative action; expose racial, ethnic and religious violence by extremist groups; support legislation to ban workplace discrimination because of sexual orientation; and build coalitions with a broad range of allies.

The convention saluted the AFL-CIO's constituency groups—the bridges between labor and communities of workers-including the newest constituency group, Pride at Work, an organization of gay, lesbian and transgendered workers.

The convention also awarded the George Meany Human Rights Award to imprisoned Indonesian labor leader Muchtar Pakpahan, who is seriously ill and receiving poor medical care. His wife, Rosintan Pakpahan, gave tearful thanks for labor's support of her husband and read from a letter he sent: "Along with fighting for my health, however, I am strug-

gling just as hard for two other things: first, the existence of democracy, justice, a constitutional state and human rights. And second, for release from prison." Pakpahan addressed the convention on a grainy videotape, taped surreptitiously at the prison.

The convention closed on an emotional high, with a rally for prevailing-wage jobs led by Jackson outside the convention center. "We made corporate America listen to working men and

women." Jackson said. "We showed that Street Heat can lead to barracuda defeat." @



United: Closing rally outside convention center (left); Labo Secretary Alexis Herman

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE [2].
RAY CROWELL/PAGE ONE: BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE [2]

By James B. Parks

rom the beginning, the Teamsters knew exactly what it would take to stand up to United Parcel Service—a worldwide corporate giant with more

than \$1 billion in profits each year.
Any chance of

changing UPS' course of creating parttime jobs and subcontracting would come only from a united and determined membership—and widespread

public support. So nearly two years before the UPS contract expired on July 31, the Teamsters were crafting a month-by-month campaign plan for organization, research, member education, mobilization and communications. By the time the

largest strike in more than a decade burst onto the national scene, the union had been methodically

rallying members around key issues and reaching out to community and politi-

cal leaders for more than a year.

Bringing together 185,000 union members—from part-time package handlers in small towns earning \$8 an hour to full-time long-haul

truck drivers earning many times more—is no small challenge. "First, you have to get organized. You have to have something that brings you together," says IBT President Ron Carey. "When you are organized, you then create the leverage you need."

Countdown to the Contract

That organizing began in earnest during the union's July 1996 convention, when UPS shop stewards received a "Countdown to the Contract"—a month-by-month calendar that included tips on how to increase pressure on UPS, build a communications network and keep workers informed and energized—along with a "Make UPS Deliver" video on how to win a good contract.

The IBT began to create a national database of activists. Members were asked to return cards to the international if they wanted to sign on to the campaign for a good contract. Each person who signed on was added to the list and received campaign literature as needed.

By September 1996, it was time to home in on the top bargaining issues. To solicit input

from the rank and file, members of the bargaining committee traveled to local unions across the country and asked members

about their contract priorities. Carey convened a national meeting of part-time workers, who by now made up two-thirds of the bargaining unit. In addition, local unions were asked to hold meetings with their members and provide feedback to the bargaining committee.

Next, the union sent out a 20-question survey to every UPS worker, asking them to rank the importance of each job-related issue. By the time those surveys were returned, the number-one bargaining priority had become apparent: UPS workers wanted more full-time

opportunities for part-time workers—and full- and part-time workers were united on the issue. "I worked as a part-timer for five years and I remembered what it was like to work for \$8 an hour for three or four hours a



Top priority: More opportunities for part-time workers

EARL DOTTER



filed whenever the 70-pound rule was violated. A series of "Don't Break Our Backs" rallies drew public attention to the problem.

the Contract

The theme in May was job security, and workers were asked to "Blow the Whistle on UPS" when they saw managers or outside contractors doing union work.

day," says Carl Allen, a UPS driver from Chicago. "I knew this was a fight we all had to stick together on." Other top-ranking issues included pension security, job safety and limits on subcontracting.

In the months leading up to the contract expiration, the union held parking lot meetings, petition drives and other events to build unity. It frequently issued fliers and bulletins to keep members informed, added a toll-free hotline number, posted information on its website and set up a system of quick communications—through e-mail, conference calls, fax bulletins and phone trees-that would allow stewards to get information out quickly.

In March, when union negotiators headed for the bargaining table, the union kicked off a series of contract campaign rallies around the country. As negotiations continued, the union mounted a massive education and mobilization campaign focusing on a different issue each month.

In April, job safety was featured in the union's UPS Update newsletter mailed to every UPS member. An issue paper and video on the health and safety problems caused by lifting packages of 70 pounds or more were released. For drivers on the road who didn't have time to read an issue paper or view a video, the union sent audiotapes.

Once members were educated on the issue, they received materials that helped them mount related on-the-

job actions, such as an easy-to-complete griev-

Half a Job Is Not Enough

The following month, the emphasis shifted to the part-time issue. The union produced educational materials showing that the surge in parttime work threatened everyone's jobs. The issue paper "Half a Job Is Not Enough" became the most popular publication of the campaign.

The part-time issue also resonated with an American public concerned about downsizing and stagnant wages. "America wants to move people from welfare to work," Carey warned repeatedly. "But with these low-wage, parttime jobs, UPS is doing just the opposite."

Long before the strike began, the union also was reaching out to other unions, community leaders, clergy members and politicians. At the same time, it was talking to the media about the issues, providing facts and figures on the abuse of part-time workers and inviting reporters to rallies and parking lot meetings—laying the groundwork for what would become an outpouring of support from the

Once the strike began, UPS drivers delivered personal letters and fliers to customers along their routes, explaining the reasons for

the strike and asking for their support. Many responded by posting signs with the message "No UPS accepted here" or "No UPS pickups until our driver has a contract."

> In cities around the country, other union members, commu-

nity leaders and elected officials joined Teamsters on the picket line-boost-

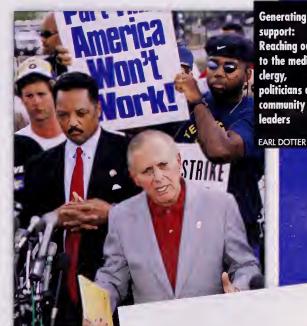
ing morale and keeping spirits high. Few UPS workers crossed the picket line. And polls showed that the American public sided with striking workers by as much as two to

During the strike, the union maintained its system of keeping members informed through daily-sometimes hourly-update bulletins that were faxed to every UPS local; e-mails and national conference calls linked local

union halls via speaker phones.

Teamster Update

Fifteen days after the strike began, UPS workers received the news: Negotiators had reached a tentative agreement, and the union had prevailed on the issues of part-time jobs, subcontracting, pensions and safety. "We achieved what we were after," says UPS driver Sam Figueroa. "All the men and women across America who are Teamsters stood tall."



to the media. clergy, politicians and community EARL DOTTER

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From construction to home care: The number of employees misclassified as independent contractors is soaring

CONTRACT

Growing numbers of workers are being pushed off the payroll and

hen she lost her job at Honeywell in 1986, Jimmie Ruth Daughtrey was devastated. "I was 50 at the time," she later testified before the House Subcommittee on Labor. "And high-tech companies did not seem too interested in hiring a 50-year-old grandmother without a college

education as a computer programmer."

So months later, when Honeywell offered her employment in another position, Daughtrey jumped at the chance. She returned to the same building to do the same sort of work she had done before, working side by side with most of the same people. Now, however, Daughtrey was considered a "consultant" rather than an employee. "I learned that this meant that I would not get any benefits and would have to pay the employer's share of Social Security taxes." she recalled.

"I just don't see why Honeywell and other companies should be able to take away all the protections Congress has given to employees just by calling them consultants. It shouldn't be that easy," she added. "I believe that if Congress does not make clear that federal employment rights protect people like me, pretty soon there will be no employees. There will only be consultants, independent contractors and other kinds of workers with no rights and no protections."

Ever since Daughtrey's testimony in 1993, the number of employees being classified—or misclassified—as "independent contractors" indeed has continued to soar. The number of people misclassified as independent contractors grew from 3.3 million to 4.1 million between 1984 and 1994—and the figure is expected to reach 5 million by 2005.

Misclassified Workers Lose Benefits

While it occurs in all sectors of the economy, misclassification of employees as contractors is especially common in the construction, farm, light manufacturing, high-tech and low-wage service industries—where growing numbers of workers suddenly are cast into arrangements in which they receive no benefits and no longer are covered by legal employment protections. In Seattle, for instance, a cleaning contractor "leased" franchises to individual janitors, most of them immi-

Growing numbers of workers are being pushed off the payroll and into "independent contractor" arrangements. Are they really their own bosses—or is this another employer scheme to pay workers less?

grants. In Dallas, garment manufacturers are subcontracting work to an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 sew-at-home workers. In the construction industry, the Internal Revenue Service estimates, 20 percent of employers regularly misclassify employees as independent contractors—who are not entitled to minimum wage

protection or overtime pay, are not covered by unemployment insurance or workers' compensation and must shoulder the entire cost of Social Security and Medicare contributions.

The trend is part of a fundamental shift toward "contingent" work driven primarily by corporations trying to increase their short-term profits by cutting their labor costs. Although some researchers argue that the increase in contingent work arrangements is the result of workers' desire for more flexibility to accommodate the dual demands of work and family, the evidence suggests that employers—not workers—are benefiting most. According to a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute, women who are classified as independent contractors earn 14 percent less than their counterparts in regular jobs; men earn 5 percent less.

Increasingly, those so-called contractors are actually employees who, like Jimmie Ruth Daughtrey, were pushed off the payroll during a downsizing spree and then returned to the same work—but without the same benefits. The Labor Department recently estimated that nearly one-fifth of all contingent workers have had a "previous different relationship" with their employers.



ers in Alameda and San
Francisco have won their
first contracts.
But independent contractors are most common in
construction, where "in

Francisco, Alameda, San

counties; home-care work-

Mateo and Santa Clara

tors are most common in construction, where "in recent years, misclassification has increased from a few incidents to a steady pattern of flagrant worker abuse,"

says Robert Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department. "As a result, construction workers and their families lose millions of dollars in health benefits, pensions and other protections."

The Building Trades Department is fighting back by going directly to the IRS for adjudication in the case of workers who are misclassified. At the same time, it is actively supporting three bills introduced by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) to codify the 20 tests the IRS uses to determine who really is an independent contractor. Those bills (H.R. 769, 770 and 771) are pending in the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

Clarifying the definition of independent contractors is one way to reduce the growing epidemic of misclassification of employees—and prevent the exploitation of contingent workers. Stronger employment protections also are needed to prevent discrimination against contingent workers, guarantee their coverage under state and federal wage and hour laws and provide greater access to family and medical leave, affordable child care, family-friendly work environments and health, pension and other benefits.

What is needed most, however, is for all workers to be guaranteed their right to improve their living and working standards by organizing a union. As the AFL-CIO commits new energy and resources to a campaign to restore the right to organize (see p. 8), it will be seeking major changes in the nation's labor laws—and one of them will be to extend to all workers fundamental rights that cannot be extinguished by employers who redefine or relabel their employees.

posal would have created a stampede of misclassified employees—from pizza deliverers and truck drivers to secretaries and journalists. AFL-CIO unions along with other advocacy groups rose in opposition to the measure, and Republicans were forced to retreat from the proposal—though it is likely to resurface in amendments to future bills.

Women Lose Protection

Women make up a large portion of the growing number of so-called independent contractors—and increasingly are without health and pension benefits as a result. Of women classified as independent contractors, only 2 percent have health insurance or pensions through their employers; by comparison, 55 percent of women in traditional jobs have health insurance and 54 percent have pensions. When women lose employee status, they also lose important protections against sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

One industry that employs large numbers of independent contractors—most of whom are women—is the fast-growing home health care industry. Home-care jobs are traditionally low-wage jobs with few benefits and little job security. But in several states, unions are successfully organizing home-care workers to improve their working and living standards. In California, for instance, a Service Employees organizing drive among 180,000 state-funded home-care workers—considered independent contractors—was made possible after the union won state legislation in 1991 allowing counties to create home-care authorities. Since then, SEIU has gained recognition for 20,000 workers in San

Anyplace but the WORKPLACE

In America, we can speak, vote and congregate freelyunless it's on the job. Here's what happens to people who try to exercise their right to organize a union, the devastating consequences for all working families—and what can be done to bring America's values back to work.

"The right to organize is a fundamental right in America, but it is a right that is too often violated....If you want to do business with the federal government, you had better maintain a safe workplace and respect civil, human, and yes, union rights....The right to organize and the right to strike are fundamental rights and nobody's tax dollars are going to be spent undermining these rights."

—Vice President Al Gore, February 1997 he union election in August was the fourth since 1974 at the Fieldcrest-Cannon mill in Kannapolis, N.C. The 5,500 workers who make sheets and towels had every reason to organize a union. They were routinely handed pay cuts and work speedups. Their pensions were so small that they often retired with benefits as low as \$35 a month. And they were

eager for the security and protections enjoyed by 3,000 UNITE members at four other Fieldcrest-Cannon mills in the South.

But during the campaign, as in every previous one, the Cannon workers were threatened and harassed. Some were fired. Others were offered bribes. All were intimidated by the company's vow to shut down the plant if the organizing drive succeeded.

Fieldcrest-Cannon engaged in so many illegal activities that the National Labor Relations Board asked the courts to step in and enforce the law. But in the end, when the votes were tallied, the union was defeated by a slim margin.

"The election will likely be overturned," says Bruce Raynor, executive vice president of UNITE, which is going back to court to demand tougher remedies for the next election and already has sent organizers back into the plant. "We won't let this outlaw company get away with stealing workers' rights. Cannon workers will have their day of victory."

The Cannon election demonstrates the profound inadequacy of the nation's labor laws which today do far more to protect employers than to defend the rights of America's workers.

Initially, in 1935, the National Labor Relations Act was passed to extend democracy to the workplace and guarantee workers the right to organize and collectively bargain without interference from their employers. But over the years, Congress weakened the laws, corporations learned how to bend them—and penalties for violating the laws became inconsequential, a minor cost of doing business.

Today, in a country that values most the right to free speech, the right to vote and freedom of assembly—and defends them with a vengeance in every other venue—workers must check those rights at the door when they show up for work each day.

As a result, union membership is at its lowest level in decades—and every working family in America is paying the price. While profits are soaring, the economy is booming and corporate executive salaries are skyrocketing, real wages are stagnating or declining. Most Americans are working longer hours just to make ends meet. Fewer workers are receiving health and pension benefits on the job. Roughly 6.6 million workers suffer workplace injuries and illnesses each year. Racial and sexual discrimination runs rampant in the workplace. And the United States today has the most uneven income distribution of any major industrialized nation.

Firings at Ark: The restaurant refuses

DAVID BACON

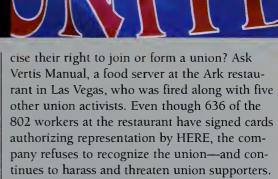
to recognize the union

"America needs a raise, and that means America's workers need the right to ask for one," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "It's time to restore the laws protecting the rights of working people to work together to solve problems, to have a voice on the job for fairness and safety, to choose for themselves whether to deal with their bosses as individuals or collectively. It's time to bring American values back to work."

The Breakdown of America's Labor Laws

Union membership is the best way for working people to make their jobs better and their futures more secure. Union workers earn an average of \$153 more each week than nonunion workers, and are far more likely to have the security of health and pension benefits. Unions also give workers a voice for safety and fair treatment on the job, and to force corporations to act responsibly toward their employees and communities.

But what happens when workers try to exer-



Aided by a \$500 million-a-year anti-union consulting industry, employers engage in a variety of tactics—both legal and illegal—to suppress organizing drives through intimidation, mass psychology and legal maneuvers. For example, employers:

- Intimidate, harass, threaten, discipline and even fire workers for supporting unions, wearing union buttons, distributing union literature or discussing the union at work. One in 10 workers involved in organizing campaigns is fired; 10,000 workers each year lose their jobs for exercising their basic rights.
- Compel workers to attend work-time meetings in which company managers and consultants give anti-union speeches, show anti-union films and distribute anti-union literature—while prohibiting union supporters from distributing literature or speaking on the employer's premises. Workers who refuse to attend are disciplined or fired.
- Interrogate workers about their union sympathies, often in one-on-one sessions.
- Explicitly threaten to close plants, lay off employees or move jobs if workers choose to organize a union.
- Use the current legal system to stonewall workers and delay union elections for months, and, if the union wins recognition, refuse to negotiate a first contract.

Many of these tactics are legal; today's labor laws allow employers to take advantage of the control they have over workers' livelihoods to create an atmosphere of fear. "It was really terrifying," says Donna Reiner, an employee at Precision Castparts near Portland, Ore. "The supervisors took me into their offices and told me that I could lose my job. They singled me

out. They told my co-workers not to talk to me. They demanded to know what I was saying to friends. They created such a climate of fear, people didn't feel safe casting a union vote."

But in many cases, as at Fieldcrest-Cannon, employers unabashedly violate the legal protections to which workers are entitled. The trivial penalties are hardly a deterrent to companies determined to keep unions out of their workplaces—and the legal system offers little recourse for workers who are denied their right to organize a union. That has been the case for Michael Boudreaux, a sheet metal worker at Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans, where the NLRB has issued complaints against the company, alleging 400 violations ranging from discriminatory discharges, demotions, transfers and layoffs to unlawful surveillance and intimidation of union supporters. The charges have done nothing to force the company to recognize the metal trades council for the 4,000 shipyard workers who voted for union representation in June of 1993. Instead, Avondale used legal maneuvers to delay the vote count for 44 months—until February of 1997—and still refuses to bargain for a first contract.

Nor does the system come to the rescue of workers who lose their jobs in the midst of an organizing drive, as did Elisa Lopez, a single mother who once worked for Sprint Corp.'s Spanish-language telemarketing subsidiary in San Francisco. After 70 percent of the more than



Out of bounds at Cannon: During fourth election, the courts step in

ROBERT FOX

200 Latino employees there signed union authorization cards, Sprint shut down the operation in July of 1994—just

eight days before a Communications Workers of America election was to take place. Years later, the NLRB found Sprint guilty of labor law violations and ordered the company to pay back wages and find comparable jobs for the dismissed workers—but to this day, Sprint has yet to comply. The company's appeals are still wending their way through the legal system.

In fact, for most workers who are fired for actively supporting a union organizing campaign, the prospects of getting their jobs back are bleak: The NLRB has a backlog of 25,000 cases brought against employers for illegal discharges.

Bring America's Values Back to Work

Around the country, America's unions are fighting on a variety of fronts to restore the right of workers to organize—and laying the groundwork for an eventual campaign for labor law

Unions cannot afford to let weak labor laws be an excuse for not organizing. Increasingly, unions are seeking alternatives to traditional NLRB elections, attempting to win neutrality agreements or voluntary card-check recognition by rallying the support of the community and elected

leaders. Community and labor support for workers fired in Everett, Mass., last year, for example, ultimately convinced the Richmark curtain manufacturing plant to recognize UNITE to represent its employees. Similarly, Mayor Willie Brown's endorsement helped HERE secure a neutrality agreement from the San Francisco Marriott.

In a number of communities, unions are building coalitions and reaching out to civic, religious and civil rights leaders to serve on Workers' Rights Boards that will hold employers accountable and encourage them to honor the decision when a majority of workers express a desire to join a union. And many unions are participating in their central labor councils' Street Heat mobilization efforts—and helping to form multi-union "rapid response" teams that can mobilize on a moment's notice when workers are threatened or fired for trying to organize.

During the August congressional recess, in home-district meetings with their members of Congress, many union activists took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the need to



local labor commu-

nities, such as the Pioneer Valley Central Labor Council in Springfield, Mass., are working to get city councils and other local government bodies to endorse the right to organize through resolutions.

The AFL-CIO and affiliated unions are intensifying efforts to restore the right to organize through grassroots education campaigns exposing the misconduct of employers, educating the public and elected leaders about unions and why workers organize, asking for pledges of support from political candidates and reaching out to allies in the community.

"When a majority of workers demonstrates the desire to join a union by signing union cards, the employer should honor the decision," says Sweeney. "It's time for anti-union corporations to stop the shameful tactics of threatening, harassing and intimidating workers to deny them their right to decide for themselves."

Help Restore the Right to Organize

To help bring basic rights back to the workplace in your community, here's what you can do:

- Press employers to recognize the union when a majority of employees sign union cards.
- Build community coalitions to support working people's right to organize.
- Establish and support Workers' Rights Boards with civic and religious leaders in your community to investigate and speak out against violations of workers' rights.
- Urge elected officials, political candidates and community leaders to join your efforts to bring basic rights back to work. Before supporting political candidates, ask them to sign pledges to protect workers' right to organize.
- Form community action teams—such as Street Heat rapid response crews—to mobilize large groups of people to protest when workers' right to organize is violated.

For more information, call the AFL-CIO Organizing Department at 202-639-6204, or fax 202-639-6210.



embers of IBEW Local 336 in Chicago, whose members work mainly for the regional phone company Ameritech, came up with an innovative way to communicate their message about the company's anti-worker tactics. For the Senior Open Golf Tournament, sponsored by Ameritech, the union hired a plane to circle the golf course pulling a banner that read: "Ameritech Unfair to Working Families.'

On June 29 and July 3 and 4, the same plane and banner flew over the city's huge Taste of Chicago event, also sponsored by Ameritech. The plane played to a large audience—more than a million people attended the July 3 event alone.

Major Contributions

FSCME has underscored the size, diversity and contributions of its membership in a new poster produced by the union's Public Affairs and Research Departments. As a reminder to the public of just how many ways AFSCME members help their communities, the poster is a hit. The concept is one that other unions may want to borrow simply because it is effective.



Released in time for local union Labor Day activities, the poster, "AFSCME: There When It Counts," quantifies the efforts of the public employee members over a year. For example, AFSCME water treatment workers provide more than 27 trillion gallons of clean drinking water; highway workers pave, plow and clean more than 2 million miles of roads; librarians and library assistants catalogue and circulate more than 450 million books and other items.

The poster notes that more than a quarter of a million babies are unionborn yearly with the assistance of AFSCME physicians and other health care workers; 3,000 zoo animals are union-fed each day by AFSCME zookeepers; and the list goes on.

"Welcome Back"

The Plumbers put out the welcome mat for former members who faced hard times during the dark years of the 1980s.

The union's amnesty program, which ended Sept. 15 after a sixmonth run, brought back into the union more than 3,500 workers who had left during the economic recession, when work dried up in the construction industry due to the anti-worker economic policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations. It was a time when many building trades workers sought employment in other sectors to put food on the table.

The returning plumbers enjoy virtually all the rights and privileges of membership, with full voting status restored after one year. They also are exempt from reinstatement fees and back dues.

Union President Martin Maddaloni says that without membership, the workers wouldn't have the opportunity to upgrade their skills, improve their productivity or learn new techniques.

"These former members are eager to return to the UA because they know firsthand what it's like to work for a nonunion contractor," he says. "They have seen the poor working conditions, substandard wages and meager benefits that predominate outside the union sector."

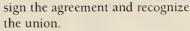
Making Stateme

ometimes words are worth a thousand pictures.

When apple workers, many of them with earnings below the poverty line, marched on the

Washington Fruit Company in Yakima, Wash., Ana Guzman and Noel Potter led the way with super-sized copies of a statement calling on management to acknowledge that workers have a right to a living wage, access to affordable health care and a safe and healthy workplace. The apple workers called for the company to

Washington State's apple industry has been experiencing explosive growth, helped along by state and federal subsidies to growers and processors, who are organizing targets of the Farm Workers and the Teamsters.



IBEW PHOT

Giving Something Back

Members of Paperworkers Local 7591 in Charleston, Ill., who were locked out for more than five months last year, are paying back the community for its support. The local has restructured its community service committee to improve the hometown. Members have cleaned up a two-mile stretch of highway and planted flowers on a corner in downtown Charleston, built a float for the July 4 parade, raised money for local families, helped out the local VFW and, with the Middle Illinois Labor Council, are organizing a food drive.

Shopfalls

s more parents work and the population ages, employees need more help with child care and elder care. Forty-two percent of workers are raising children; more than 22 million households provide care for elderly family members, and this number is expected to soar as baby boomers reach retirement age.

Because high-quality, reliable and affordable child and elder care are hard to find, unions are bargaining for new programs and benefits to help workers:

- Resource and referral services, provided in-house or through contracts, help employees find care providers. CWA and IBEW negotiated a provision in their AT&T contract calling for a nationwide program to help workers find, gauge and manage care for elderly relatives.
- Tax help, through Dependent Care Assistance Plans or Flexible Spending Accounts, allows a worker to put up to \$5,000 of earnings a year into a tax-free account to pay for child or elder care.

Bargaining for Child and Elder

Care

Five ways to ease the pressure on today's working families.



- Some unions have negotiated employerpaid child and elder care funds that directly pay caregivers or reimburse workers' expenses. The 1199 Health and Human Services Union negotiated employer contributions to a child care program covering 150 New York City hospitals and overseen by labor-management committees at each worksite.
- Many union agreements include on-site, off-site or subsidized child care. Three New York State workers unions negotiated state funding for a network that sets up nonprofit child care centers; families are charged fees on a sliding scale.
- Unions also are bargaining for paid and unpaid family and sick leave, expanding what's required of employers under the Family and Medical Leave Act. The Teamsters contract with Pennsylvania State University, for example, allows workers to use their sick leave to care for ailing family members.

For more information, contact the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department (202-637-5064; website: www.aflcio.org/women), the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), a national advocacy organization for working women (202-466-4610), or the Labor

Project for Working Families (510-643-6814; website: http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~iir/workfam/home.html).

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERSFOR FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS

A. The process by which companies are

Q. I'm from Teamsters Local 631 and I would like to know why Wal-Mart is not on the "Don't Buy—Boycott" list? placed on the AFL-CIO "Don't Buy" list begins at the local union level. The local's officers first request authorization for a boycott from their international union, which in turn can request that the AFL-CIO place that company on the list. To do that takes the approval of the Executive Council. Charles Mercer, president of the AFL-CIO Union Label and Service Trades Department, explains that there are some localized boycotts of Wal-Mart stores, but not a national boycott.

A. Unions can bargain for provisions requiring

Q. The "Ask a Working Woman" survey found that equal pay is the most important concern for working women. What can unions do to make sure their members receive fair pay? employers to disclose information about salaries and mandating equal pay for comparable work. Often, employers will pay workers in traditional

"women's jobs" (such as secretaries) less than those in traditional "men's jobs" (such as truck drivers), even if the jobs require similar skills, education and responsibility. Unions can insist that employers compare these jobs and make sure the jobs pay what they are worth, take the lead in filing wage discrimination complaints and lawsuits and lobby for stronger enforcement of existing pay equity laws or for new state and federal laws.

Have a question? Drop us a line, post us a message or pick up the phone, and we'll try to find the answer. Write us at 815 16th St., N.W., Room 402, Washington, D.C. 20006; e-mail to 71112.53@compuserve.com; call 202-637-5010 or fax 202-508-6908.

AFLCIO

PUBLICATIONS

• Audacious Democracy: Labor, Intellectuals and the Social Reconstruction of America is a



collection of 21 essays by academics and labor activists who participated in last year's nationally acclaimed "teach-in" at Columbia University, the first of more than a dozen around the country. Contributors John Sweeney, Betty Friedan and a wide range of authors, sociologists, columnists and union leaders focus on a "shifting in the social metabolism" of the country and the

growing movement to unite academic, progressive and labor communities in the fight for social justice and economic security. Edited by Steven Fraser and Joshua Freeman and published by Houghton Mifflin (800-225-3362), the book is available in bookstores for \$12.

• Sweatshops aren't only in the history

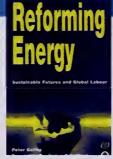


books. The revival of sweatshops in the clothing business today is described in *No Sweat*, edited by Andrew Ross. The 311-page book describes the work of unions such as UNITE and other groups that have been in the frontline fight against modern sweatshops. In *No Sweat*, an array of contributors,

including fashion writers, unionists and professors, gives voice to the hundreds of thousands of sweatshop workers here and abroad. *No Sweat* is available for \$19 from W.W. Norton & Co. (phone: 800-233-4830).

• In Outsider in the House, the autobiography of Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), the only Independent in Congress describes his unique political career and discusses how to reverse the growing inequality of income distribution and the importance of reinvigorating America's union movement. The book is available for \$25 from Verso, 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014; phone: 212-807-9680; fax: 212-807-9152.

• Reforming Energy: Sustainable
Futures and Global Labour, a publication of
Pluto Press in association with the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and
General Workers' Unions (ICEM), is a comprehensive analysis of the global trends in the
energy industries and their implications for the
environment, jobs and the community. The
book provides a plan of action for reforming



energy markets and industries to meet employment, social and environmental objectives. It costs \$16.95 and can be ordered through ICEM, 815 16th

St., N.W., Washington, DC 20006; phone: 202-842-7892; fax: 202-842-7801.

• The AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees has available *Can For-Profit Medicine Be Compatible With Good Health Care?*—an address by syndicated columnist Robert Kuttner, co-founder and co-editor of *The American Prospect*. Kuttner discusses the implications of increasing commercialization of health care. The publication is \$3; quantity prices are available on request. Contact Marjorie Wheeler at DPE (202-638-0320, ext. 4) for details.

ON THE WEB

• The Internet Union Hotel Guide, produced by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, can be found at www.erols.com/hereiu. The website gives travelers a complete listing of union lodgings throughout the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and even has links to some hotels so you can make your reservations online. For a printed copy of the guide, write HERE, 1219 28th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20007; fax: 202-393-0726.

VIDEOS

- The producers of *We Do the Work*, an independently produced videotape series, are making the tapes available to unions, coalitions, libraries and schools. The videos depict the lives, history and issues of working people, and include such award-winning titles as "Strikestory," "This Far by Faith," and "Family Fuel: A Coal Strike Story." To order individual tapes or to subscribe to the "tape of the month" club, contact the California Working Group Inc., P.O. Box 10326, Oakland, CA 94610-0326; phone: 510-547-8484; fax: 510-547-8844. Receive a 10 percent discount when ordering three or more tapes.
- Wonder of the World, a documentary video about the 1981 Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Co. strike, is available for a \$20 donation (including shipping) from the Rhode Island Institute for Labor Studies and Research, 99 Bald Hill Rd., Cranston, RI 02920; phone: 401-463-9900; fax: 401-463-8190. The 50-minute video provides an inside look at the tool-making company's history and the strike by Machinists members.

UNION LINE

Union-Made Cures

Inion members make a sizeable portion of the nation's prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceutical products for health care and personal hygiene.

The United Food and Commercial Workers produce Doan's Pills, Desenex, Efidac, Maalox, Regutol, Feen-a-Mint, Correctol, Solarcaine, Di-Gel, Chooz, Aspergum, Duration, Inhiston, Nujal, St. Joseph's Aspirin, Asacol, Brontex, Dantrium, Didronel, Macrobid, Macrodantin, Zebeta, Ziac, Alka-Seltzer, Flintstones and One-A-Day vitamins, Iohexol, Iodixanol, Di-Pac, Milk of Magnesia, Spectrocin, Swecta, Golden Bounty, Theragran, Vigran Chewables, Valadol and Trigesic.

The UFCW members also make Riopan, Auralgan liquid, Antabuse tablets, Kerodex, Protopam Chloride, Laryglan, Phospholine Iodide, Ophthalgan, Dermoplast, Fluor-I-Strip, Peptavlon, Aygestin, Estradurin, Factrel, Diucardin, Medriatic,

Enzactin Cream, Premarin, Inderide, Mysoline, Grisactin, PMB tablets, APL injectables, Clusivol, Beminal, Posture, Posture-D, Fiber Guard, Plegine, Inderal, Fluothane, Atromid-S and Epitrate.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers produce Spectrocin, Swecta,

Golden Bounty, Theragran, Vigran, Milk of Magnesia, Valadol, Trigesic, Plegine, Peptavlon, Inderal, Fluothane, Atromid-S, Epitrate and other products.

The Steelworkers have a contract for Bactine, Alka-Seltzer and One-a-Day vitamins.



Twenty-seven years ago, Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising a safe job

for every U.S. worker. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved and millions of injuries and illnesses prevented—but the job of protecting workers at work isn't over.

Every year, 7 million workers are killed, injured or made sick on the job—one worker every five seconds. And employers and their allies in Congress are fighting to roll back safety protections and weaken worker rights.

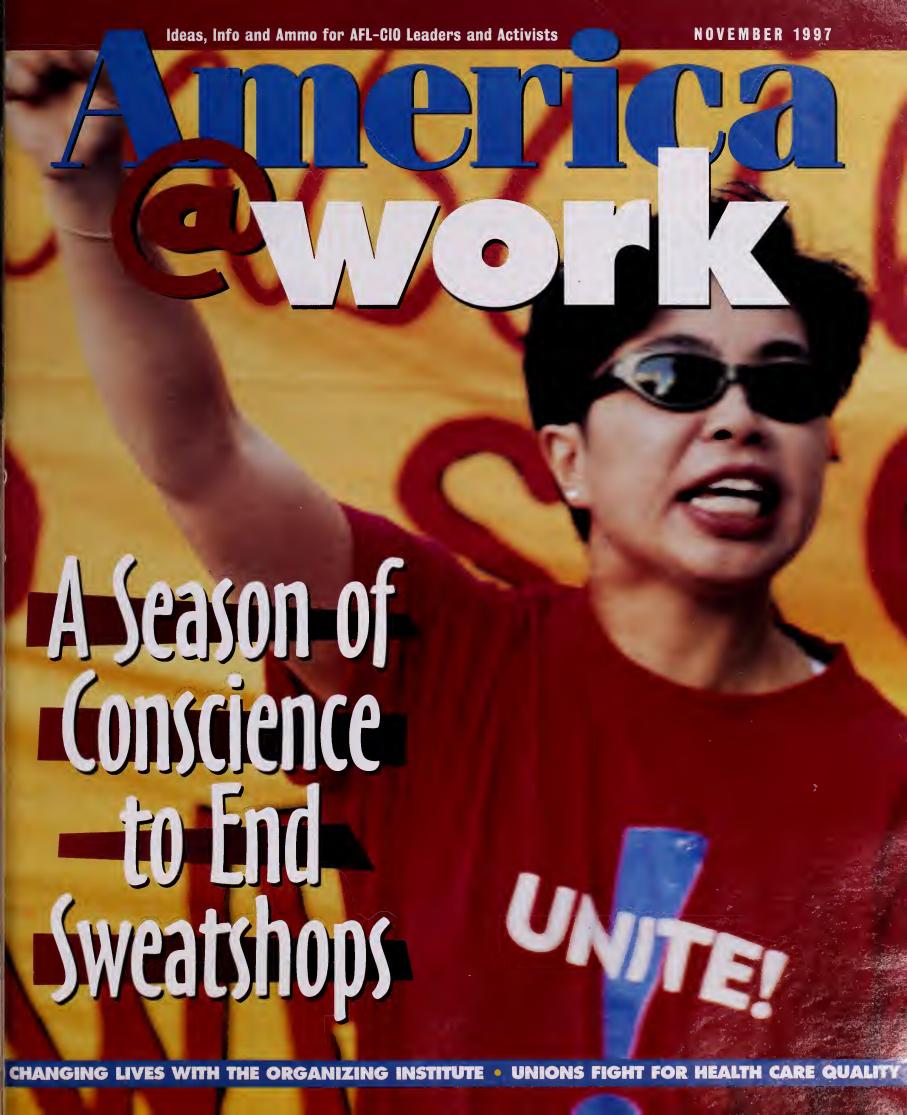
It's time to counter their actions by mobilizing for safe jobs—in our workplaces, in the legislatures, in the courts and on the street.

The AFL-CIO National Safety and Health Conference will bring together local and national union safety and health representatives, organizers, officers and members to learn about safety and health problems, exchange information and develop strategies to mobilize for safe jobs.

To find out more about the National Safety and Health Conference, call 202-637-5367, fax 202-508-6978 or visit our website at www.aflcio.org

Sessions Include:

- Fighting for Safety and Health in an Anti-Worker Environment
- Organizing and Safety and Health
- Stop the Pain: Preventing
 Repetitive Strain Injuries and
 Back Injuries
- Future Strategies and Actions
- Workshops on Key Safety and Health Issues
- Mobilizing Workshops



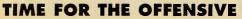
Ideas and Views From You

AFTER THE WORKING WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

@ "The Ask a Working Woman conference was excellent. I came away very enthused. When I returned to my local, I copied and mailed the sweatshop petition to all of our shop stewards. I also sent a heated letter to my congressman telling him not to extend NAFTA until Congress can fix the current agreement. I plan to write the president and the first lady."—Bobbie Hiller, office manager, Teamsters Local 79, Tampa, Fla.

WHERE'S THE BLAME?

"Why wasn't President Clinton identified in the September 1997 America@work article 'All Aboard the Not So Fast Track' as being the prime mover and advocate of the fasttrack legislation now before Congress...? readers of your publication, and that you tried to shield President Clinton from the criticism that he deserves?"-Frank N. Scalise, Erie, Penn.



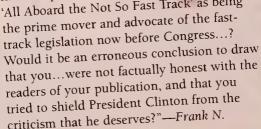
@ "Corporate fat-cats have declared war on America's working families, and we don't have the time to sit around and discuss defensive strategies. Our main problem is that we have been thinking defensively for too many years....

"We need to get off our butts and go on the offensive. The only way to survive is not to duck and hide, but to stand and fight! Priority should be placed on educating our membership first and then our communities as a whole. American workers must be made aware of what is really going on....We must educate and mobilize our rank-and-file members at the grassroots levels. Although it is true that the fat-cats have all the money (they outspent labor's \$35 million by a margin of 17-to-one), we have the numbers to make the difference in elections."—Fred Fuchs, president, Fresno County (Calif.) Chapter, Service Employees Local 75

MORE ON PART-TIMERS

@ "I applaud the Teamsters Union and the labor movement for standing up for decent pay and benefits for part-time workers and resisting using 'cheaper' part-timers to reduce full-time jobs. However, I think the labor movement needs to think harder how to make part-time jobs, which are at least 75 percent held by women, more unionized, better paid and better benefitted....

"I propose that the new labor movement devote resources to gathering the views of part-time workers, organized and unorganized, about what they want from their jobs—and then help organize and negotiate for this important 18 percent of the workforce!"—Susan C. Eaton, research associate, Radcliffe Public Policy Institute; former research associate, SEIU Local 399





communities@work, that's when you see



America@work has a new, simpler e-mail address: atwork@aflcio.org

THANKS!

(6) "We want to express our support of the AFL-CIO's strong offer of help (loans up to \$10 million, etc.) to the Teamsters' strike fund for the recent United Parcel Service strike action. This supportive position has made us feel especially proud of our affiliation with AFL-CIO.

"It seemed to us that the Teamsters and UPS workers were staking their positions on principles important to the union movement as a whole as well as to UPS workers. We must all stick together when control of benefits and 'full-time' entitlement to benefits and job security are concerned."— George Smith, secretary, Gardiner Chapter of Maine State Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

Say What?

What is your union doing to end sweatshops and encourage unionlabel purchasing?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work

815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org



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Unions are fighting to end sweatshop abuse of workers here and abroad, launching a Holiday Season of Conscience

PUTTING OUR CAPITAL TO WORK

Workers historically have had little say over how their pension funds, savings plans and stock ownership plans are invested. It's time to make sure workers' capital will provide for their security and for long-term value

HEALTH CARE CLOUT

As the largest group of health care buyers, consumers and workers, unions are working to put quality back into managed care



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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID BACON

November 1997 3

Elie Viu

No fast track! Thousands of working people booed the trade proposal at this Wall Street rally and around the country

WORKING FAMILIES WINTRADE FOST Trock Deroiled

The will of working families won out over a full-court press by Republican congressional leaders, business interests and the White House pushing for fast-track trade authority when the administration asked the U.S. House on Nov. 10 to postpone the legislation until next year.

With some 800,000 phone bank calls, 750,000 postcards and hundreds of rallies drawing tens of thousands of activists, union members made their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

"The decision to pull down the fast-track legislation is the first bit of blue sky working Americans have seen in U.S. trade policy in many years," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said. "The message is clear: Trade policies must respect people as well as property, and factor in

workers' and environmental concerns along with business interests."

The trade measure would have given the president authority to negotiate trade deals that Congress could approve or reject, but not amend. Concerned about fast track's effects on jobs and the environment, a majority of Americans—from all income groups and in all parts of the country—opposed fast track, recent polls showed.

A massive campaign against fast-track negotiating authority by the AFL-CIO and affiliate unions helped convince wavering lawmakers to derail the proposal, which once was considered a "done deal." The AFL-CIO ran television and radio ads in key congressional districts, and unionists let their representatives and senators know that they would be held accountable for their stands on fast track.

As the debate heated up, the business community intensified its \$5.5 million fast-track drive with television and radio ads in 104 congressional districts and a Chamber of Commerce call to arms, urging 50,000 of its activists to contact their lawmakers. In a last-ditch effort to salvage fast track, the administration offered up too-little-too-late programs to expand trade adjustment and training assistance.

Unionists hope to be able to work with elected officials next year to create a new framework for trade negotiations, one that will thoroughly embrace labor and environmental concerns.

"Americans understand that the question is not whether we will or should trade—of course we should," Sweeney says. "They understand that there is no turning back from our increasingly global economy. But they also understand that how we trade and how we engage with other nations matters."

RAY CROWELL/PAGE ONE

People first: President George Becker leads Steelworkers at Capitol Hill rally

Labor Loses Sturdivant

ohn N. Sturdivant, president of the Government Employees for the past nine years, died Oct. 28 after a year-long battle with leukemia. Sturdivant, 59, led the union through two tumultuous government shutdowns in late 1995 and 1996, was instrumental in developing new labor-management partnerships in government through the National

Partnership Council and headed the campaign that won AFGE's 20-year goal to allow federal employees to be politically active without undue restrictions.

"John Sturdivant was one of the nicest, most decent leaders and one of the most effective fighters America's working families have ever had," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said. "He protected the lives and fortunes of federal workers and the integrity of government aggressively at a time of tremendous challenge and frequent attack, applying his trademark wit and principle."

Secretary-Treasurer Bobby L. Harnage will fill out the remainder of Sturdivant's term.

Frontier Strike End in Sight

The six-year strike at the Frontier Hotel & Gaming Hall in Las Vegas, during which not one union member crossed the picket line, approached an end in late October when the hotel was sold.

Kansas businessman Phillip G. Ruffin, who reportedly is paying Frontier owner Margaret Elardi and her family more than \$165 million for the resort and its 26 acres of Strip real estate, has reached an agreement with the five unions representing about 550 workers who have remained in solidarity during one of the nation's longest-running strikes.

Under the agreement, the workers—members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, the Teamsters, the Operating Engineers and the Carpenters—will have contracts matching those at other Strip hotels. The agreement restores full seniority rights to all workers who want to return to the Frontier and commits management to work to resolve outstanding unfair-labor-practice issues.

The workers were forced to strike on September 21, 1991, when the

Frontier eliminated pensions, slashed wages, cut health benefits, eliminated job security and refused to bargain for a new contract.

Workers will continue to walk the picket line for the next few months until Ruffin obtains his gaming license and takes over the property.



Good news: HERE Secretary-Treasurer John Wilhelm and Jim Arnold, Culinary Local 226 secretarytreasurer, celebrate with Frontier workers

4 America@work

working families

John Sturdivant: "One of the

most effective fighters" for

TIME DRGANIZE

ongress has declared jazz a national treasure, but jazz musicians are not treasured by their employers. That's the impetus behind the Justice for Jazz Artists campaign launched last month by Musicians Local 802. The organizing drive's goal is to ensure decent wages and health and pension benefits for all jazz musicians, whether they work in clubs or on the road, teach or record.

The drive has gained strong support in New York City, one of the country's hotbeds of jazz.

"Only through joint action, which leads to union representation and a legally binding contract between the union and an employer, can jazz musicians be assured dignity, respect and financial security," says William D. Moriarity, president of Local 802.

Thousands of jazz artists perform nightly throughout the city and only a handful—such as the jazz orchestras at Lincoln Center, Carnegie

All that juzz: Musician Isaac ben Hall and the Village Vanguard—are organized. The Count Basie Orchestra recently was organized.

> The local has targeted the 71 adjunct staff members at the New School's prestigious jazz education program for organization. Some of the top names in the jazz world teach there but have had no raise in three years and have no benefits, not even a faculty lounge, says Local 802 organizer George Bidermann.



e Dream MARC

TIM DABNAU



Save the Dream: Led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, thousands marched and rallied in Sacramenta, Calif., Octaber 27 ta "Save the Dream" of racial equality and unity. AFL-CIO President Jahn Sweeney addressed the rally. Motown Wraps Up '97 Organizing Conferences

ome 600 activists gathered Oct. 23 in the Motor City to participate in the last of 14 AFL-CIO regional organizing conferences scheduled this year.

In a show of support for the Food and Commercial Workers' campaign to organize workers at Borders Bookstore locations in the area, participants rallied outside the State of Michigan Building. Unionists also joined with newly organized workers to pledge support for the Detroit newspaper strikers.

Since their inception, the regional organizing conferences have attracted more than 14,000 foot soldiers eager to battle for the hearts and minds of unorganized workers nationwide. @

SPOTLIGHT

Almost Any Road Will Take You to ONCI

ith the Greater Boston Central Labor Council voting unanimously in October to embrace the Union Cities initiative, Massachusetts soon may be able to rename itself the Union State.

Boston joins the neighboring Lawrence-Haverhill-Newburyport Central Labor Council as well as the North Shore Central Labor Council and the Pioneer Valley Central Labor Council in making a commitment to the Union Cities program. The Boston CLC proved itself as a union city earlier this year when it joined a citywide effort to pass a living wage for Boston.

"I am pleased to see that so many Massachusetts central labor councils are embracing the Union Cities concept and working so hard to rebuild the labor movement in this state and beyond," says Joseph Faherty, president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. "By building Union Cities, we are building better communities and better governments for working people everywhere."

So far, 110 labor councils in

41 states—representing more than 6 million unionists—have signed on to the Union Cities program, pledging to boost organizing resources, increase membership, mobilize, educate members about economic fairness for working families, open doors to diversity and build support for the right to organize. They have been focusing on Street Heat mobilization to support organizing campaigns and first contracts, fattening turnout at anti-fast track rallies and laying the foundation for Labor '98.

For more information about the Union Cities program, contact the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department at 202-637-5280, or contact your local labor council.



No thanks: Circulation drop sends Detroit newspapers the message

currents

Detroit Papers Not Rebounding

he latest independent audit of the circulation of Detroit's two daily newspapers shows that average daily and Sunday sales are down significantly from the levels before the 1995 strike by 2,000 employees. The annual audit by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the leading independent reviewer of newspaper circulation figures, shows that home delivery of the Detroit News dropped 40 percent since the strike began; numbers for the Free Press were down by 39 percent; the combined Sunday edition lost 37 percent.

"I think these figures reflect the community anger at what these papers have done to their unions," says Lou Mleczko, president of the Newspaper Guild of Detroit.

The workers suspended their strike in February, but the papers have not rehired



many of the strikers and still refuse to fire any replacement workers, although an NLRB administrative law judge has ruled that the strike was the result of an unfair labor practice by the companies. Hearings on the dismissal of 32 strikers have been delayed for seven months

Knight-Ridder, owner of the *Free Press*, extended its anti-union campaign to Indiana, telling Gary *Post-Tribune* employees only five days before a scheduled bargaining session that it had canceled the Guild contract. Knight-Ridder has announced that it is selling the paper. This is the first time *Post-Tribune* Guild employees have been without a contract in 55 years.

"Deforming" OSHA

Union safety and health representatives meeting in Cincinnati Nov. 16–19 for the AFL-CIO's Mobilize for Safe Jobs conference are taking on the fight against legislation to deform the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The bills (S. 1237 and H.R. 2579) are retreads of failed OSHA "reform" legislation introduced by the Republicans in the previous Congress. They would shift the OSHA law's focus from strong enforcement to voluntary compliance, allow warnings to be issued instead of citations—even for serious violations of the law—and end workers' right to onsite investigations of complaints about workplace hazards.

The one-sided legislation seeks to penalize workers while immunizing employers that violate the law—exempting from civil penalties employers that had received a "declaration of compliance" from a qualified individual, including corporate safety and health staff or consultants. The legislation even allows workers to be fined, although OSHA law clearly establishes that a safe and healthy workplace is the employer's responsibility.

For more information contact the AFL-CIO Department of Occupational Safety and Health at 202-637-5366.

ORGANIZING

AFSCME A three-month organizing blitz signed up more than 2,800 San Diego County home care attendants as members of AFSCME's United Domestic Workers. At the University of Massachusetts Medical Center at Worcester, AFSCME Council 93 gained almost 2,300 new members in a Sept. 11 vote, after community and political leaders influenced the university to adopt a neutrality agreement. The union also gained 100 workers at a recently privatized county nursing home in Oregon.

ALASKA FISHERMEN The Seafarers affiliate gained more than 400 new members over the summer, winning five out of five elections, finishing a perfect season when biologists at Salt Water Inc. in Anchorage voted 64–23 for union representation.

CV/A The University Professional and Technical Employees CWA

Local 9119 organized health care professionals in August at the University of California's five medical centers, in Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco.

HERE On Sept. 12, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 355 won a representation vote for 118 Service America workers at the Miami Convention Center. At the Showboat Mardi Gras Casino, HERE Local 1 (Chicago) won cardcheck recognition for 250 workers in August.

IAM At Raytheon Aerospace Support Systems in Corpus Christi, Texas, 220 employees voted for Machinists representation after two previous unsuccessful organizing attempts.

IBEW Employees at the last unorganized Asplundh branch in

California voted for representation by Electrical Workers Local 47 (Diamond Bar) in September, adding 210 workers to union ranks.

IBT New Teamsters include 100 workers at Maryland News Distributors Company in Baltimore and 105 probation officers and group supervisors in the Tulare County (Calif.) Corrections Association.

IUOE Only 90 of 383 workers at DZB Inc.'s ammunition plant in Hawthorne, Nev., were members of the Operating Engineers at the beginning of 1997; an organizing drive boosted that to 195. During a contract dispute, when the union put up a 24-hour picket line, 65 more workers came on board.

MINE WORKERS Concerned about job security, more than 150

workers at Shelby Die Casting in Fayette, Ala., voted "Union Yes!" just before Labor Day.

SEIU Nurses and health care workers in Pennsylvania state hospitals, clinics and prisons chose District 1199P as their new representative, adding 2,000 new members to SEIU's ranks. In addition, 160 medical assistants, lab technicians and other workers at the Central Blood Bank in Pittsburgh joined SEIU Local 585. In Milwaukee, 120 workers at Southpointe Nursing Home voted for SEIU Local 150 representation. In Chicago, SEIU will represent 150 workers at LBR Cleaning Co.

UNITE Nearly 400 nursing home workers (mostly immigrants) at Florida Club Care and East Ridge Retirement Village voted for Needletrades representation Sept. 11 and 12.

A PROMISE KEPT:

Mill Reopens

a made national news in 1995 when Aaron Feuerstin, owner of Malden Mills in Lawrence, Mass., promised his workers that he would rebuild and reopen the plant, which was partly destroyed by fire. On Sept. 14, he kept his promise and dedicated a new \$130 million factory. Nearly all the 2,700 employees, including UNITE members, have been rehired. The company is working at more than 100 percent of the capacity it had at the time of the fire. @

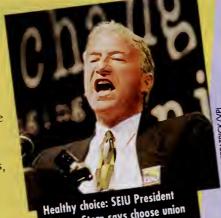
UNION HEALTH CARE BY CHOICE

f you are looking for a healthy option, choose union health care. That's the message of SEIU's newest campaign, "I Choose Union Healthcare,"

launched during the AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh.

"Looking for the union label has become a way of life for us," says Andrew Stern, president of SEIU. "We drive union cars, use union printers, buy union clothes and stay in union hotels. Now it's time to insist on union health care."

Many unions are finding ways to safeguard health care quality and health care workers in the new era of



Andrew Stern says choose union health care

managed care (see story, page 16). "Unions should push for information about health care plans based on quality of care, not just cost," says Stern. "We are the largest organized group of health care purchasers and we must begin to act together to ensure that members receive the highest-quality affordable health care available," he says.

___S WHY I CHOOSE UNION HEALTHCARE



CHOOSE QUALITY CHOOSE UNION

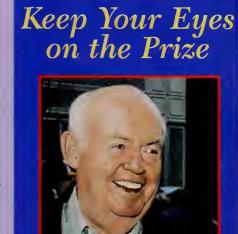
OUT FRONT

ight about now you're probably making a list and checking it twice-crafting and revising a 1998 budget and work plan. This is a good time to think about what we need to do to give working families a more powerful voice. I hope you'll consider these priorities:

- Organizing: Will at least 30 percent of your budget and effort go toward building labor's ranks? All our plans to help working families improve their lives through bargaining, political and legislative action and enhanced economic justice are meaningless without the momentum of organizing wins to back them up. Our membership numbers are starting to grow. Nothing we do
- in the coming year is more important than multiplying those
- Member education: Even gifted leaders must give people a reason to follow them. Do your plans include informing members about the hows and whys of effecting change on the job, in their communities, in government and in the economy? Programs such as the building trades' COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training) and the AFL-CIO's MEMO (Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing) reinforce for members the importance of organizing. We also need to make sure members understand high-priority legislative and industry issues on which we may ask them to act.
- The right to organize: We may be years away from getting greater worker protection from America's labor laws. But meanwhile we can each do our part to build public support for the basic free speech and free association rights that add up to workers' right to
- Street Heat: Are you doing the planning it takes to turn out real people power? Creating databases and telephone trees, building links with other unionists and forging community alliances?
- Diversity: If your leadership doesn't look like your membership, or if your membership doesn't look like the industry's workforce, what will you do to foster authentic inclusiveness in 1998?
- Issue activism: Have you built channels to ensure that state and federal lawmakers will hear your members' voices on working family issues in 1998?
- Political activism: How will you provide the information your members need to support pro-worker candidates and work to defeat anti-worker shills for Corporate America and the right

Budgeting is never easy. It's particularly difficult when we know that in all our priority areas we're up against corporate interests capable of and committed to outspending us by hundreds of dollars

That's why it's important now, as we plan for 1998, to keep our eyes on the prize: a bigger, stronger labor movement giving a louder, stronger voice to working families.



IT'S

BUDGEA

By John J. Sweeney

IT'S NOT JUST A JOB, IT'S A

Movement:

ORGANIZING FOR TODAY'S UNIONS

Point a committed person toward the

Organizing Institute and you'll change

his or her life—and other lives as well.



hat makes a job-hunting college graduate or an experienced rank-and-file worker change direction and head for a career in union organizing? According to four new organizers, all Organizing Institute alumni, background is a factor but a mentor convinced that you're the right kind of person for the job can make all the difference.

Two of the people who pointed these organizers in new directions were organizers themselves; another was a shop steward, and one was a college professor. Each recognized a spark of commitment and leadership ability and recommended signing on with the Organizing Institute.

Ramiro Hernandez, now an organizer with SEIU Local 399 in Los Angeles, found his turning point when he heard Ben Monterroso, an SEIU organizer, address a group of Los Angeles community organizers.

"Ben seemed very sincere when he talked about organizing workers," says Hernandez. "I thought, 'If he cares this much, maybe it's something that I want to check out."

Changing lives: Jimi Williams (right), with Bridgestone/Firestone employee John Brown in Kingstree, S.C.

RY MURIFICO OPFR

Hernandez was an active community organizer and member of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers. "People had encouraged me to apply to the OI, but it wasn't until I talked to Ben that I really became encouraged to follow it up. It was the beginning of a lifechanging experience," he says.

Jimi Williams had been working at Tultex Corp. in Martinsville, Va., for 13 years when his eyes were opened. He'd been through four organizing campaigns before he and his coworkers, some with tears pouring down their faces, were able to celebrate a long-awaited victory in 1994 when Tultex workers voted 1,321–710 for UNITE representation.

"Through all of the ups and downs of the campaigns, I always had it in the back of my mind that I might want to organize," he says. "Since I went from working in an unorganized plant to one where you have a contract and a grievance process, I see the difference. I want to share that with others."

Michael Freeman, a UNITE organizer who worked on the Tultex campaign, encouraged Williams to apply to the OI. Today, Williams too is a UNITE organizer.

As the daughter of immigrants, Arianne Jiménez was primed to fight for rights—her own and others'. A Bard College professor helped her see labor as the arena for her fight.

"I always felt that it was my right to get a good education. I put myself through college and then my professor, Shelley McConnell, challenged me to think about what's out there, what's next after college," she says.

Dan Corvino, a new Teamsters organizer from New Jersey, grew up in a union family and was fairly active in his local. But it wasn't until his chief steward dropped off an application to the OI that Corvino's appreciation of unions grew.

"I have never adapted to something so easily or been so interested in anything until I became an organizer. I feel it's my fate," Corvino says.

These are the kind of people that the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute is looking for—motivated and committed to fight for social justice.

"We are looking for people, like these four recent OI graduates, who have talent and a commitment to creating change," says Allison Porter, director of the OI.

"We will teach them the fundamentals of union organizing and place them with affiliates to develop their skills. We have an extensive recruiting program that takes us into local union halls, on organizing campaigns and college campuses. We give training opportunities to people who have an interest in organizing. We will go anywhere to find them. And we value union leaders, organizers and activists who point them to us."

The Right Stuff

Three-fourths of the 1,000 or so applicants who attended the OI's three-day training session last year were

referred by their unions. Making the effort to spot and harness talent builds the ranks needed to revitalize labor through organizing.

"Jimi is a natural leader," says Freeman. "He is a person who commands a lot of respect. He is someone who...encourages [people] to stand up for the right thing. During the last Tultex campaign, Jimi talked to four shifts of people—that's about 400 workers—to step forward to support the union."

"People from the OI liked the idea that I came out of a plant and could identify with the workers," Williams says. "Sometimes there is the perception that the OI is only for young college graduates, but it is also for seasoned workers who can share their experiences with

KNOW AN OI CANDIDATE?

People who have the talent, drive and ability to organize are rare indeed. If you know someone who can both listen and lead, agitate and think strategically, travel and work hard, then you have a candidate. Tell that person about the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute.

And let us know, too. Call 800-848-3021 for an application packet, or write to the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

people. When I talk to young people, they say, 'I enjoyed your story.' I tell them, 'This isn't a story. This is a part of life.'"

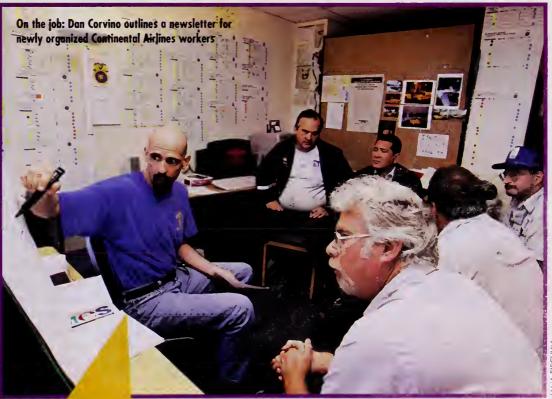
Members who are organizing their own workplaces tend to be very strong in their commitment to organizing. "Jimi is strong because he actually went through four orga-

nizing campaigns," says Porter. "He can tell workers he's heard the company line about plant closings and firings and that didn't happen. Instead, the workers got a good contract and the plant didn't close."

While folks with Williams' experience are embraced by the OI, so are college students whose hearts are in the right place and who show potential to change lives.

"My parents came here to improve their lives," says Jiménez. "The concept that we have to fight for our rights strikes a chord. You have to give people a vision for themselves and then show them how to put their own vision into practice," she says.

Jiménez entered the OI program with a



INA BIRCHUM



In the field: Arianne Jiménez (right) and health care workers discuss standing up for quality patient care

vision: teaching immigrants how to stand strong. She also possessed bilingual skills and a strong sense of justice. "Four or five unions offered her jobs when she completed her training," says Porter.

"I've always been political," says Jiménez. "I attended a labor teach-in last year at Columbia University and thought it was great. Also, a

recruiter, Michael Sullivan, came to our campus to talk about the OI. Then I had a class where we learned about George Meany. My professor, Shelley McConnell, also encouraged me. It's like everything came together. Now I'm working for SEIU Local 144," she says.

"I know I would not have been able to be an organizer without attending the OI," says

Jiménez. "I didn't know anybody or have any experience. The OI is great for someone who is coming out of school or seeking a career change. It gives you a way to prove yourself, and unions know they are taking less of a chance when you have been certified by the OI."

"Ben and Michael understand what we are looking for, and the kind of people we'd love to have come on board," says Porter. "We are able to look at their skills and make recommendations on who should be put into organizing positions."

Organizing's Boot Camp

OI training is intense, and exposes potential organizers to the basics of mobilizing workers. After their three days at the OI, selected trainees go on to a three-week paid field internship, followed by a three-month paid apprenticeship.

"The OI offers an excellent program," says Corvino. "The program teaches you a lot about the history of unions, such as fighting for a 40hour work week and health and safety issues, many of which we take for granted."

Hernandez found the three-day training "incredible."

"I went in thinking old labor hasn't changed, but what I saw were new faces and a new feeling about organizing," he says.

For Hernandez, the sale was closed when he spent his apprenticeship in Denver. "I worked on the Justice for Janitors campaign and the workers were so exploited," he says. "They were fighting for their basic needs, things I took for granted. If you are going to make a difference in the community, you can start by making a difference where you work.

"Now I am working...on a statewide organizing campaign for health care workers. I'm excited because I'm back home in my community and I see the conditions the workers are facing. I tell them they can make a change," he says.

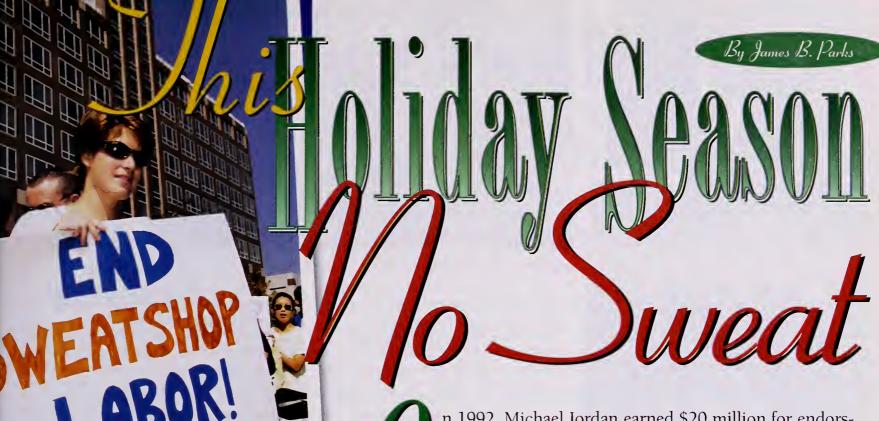
"The OI taught me the subtle art form of agitation, which is, it is okay to ask people if they are mad about their working conditions. When I arrived in Houston to work on the Continental Airline campaign, I was struck by the desire of the mechanics to organize. It was a positive union atmosphere in a right-to-work state," says Corvino of his apprenticeship.

"These are the type of field experiences that we want all of our organizers to come away with," says Porter. "Many times trainees are exposed to campaigns in the private and public sectors so they can learn different organizing strategies." The classroom training gives potential organizers the chance to get their feet wet. The field training is the plunge.

"With the emphasis being put on organizing, unions are on the lookout for new talent and skills," says Porter. "And they know when an individual graduates from the OI, they are ready to go to work. This is what the labor movement needs."



House calling: Ramiro Hernandez (right) visits Matthew Even in San Pedro, Calif.



n 1992, Michael Jordan earned \$20 million for endorsing Nike's running shoes, more than the combined wages of the 30,000 Indonesian workers who made them. Another Michael, Disney CEO Eisner, received \$97,600 an hour in salary and stock options in 1996:

325,000 times the 30-cent hourly wage of the Haitian workers who made Pocahontas, Lion King and Hunchback of Notre Dame T-shirts and pajamas and who sewed on Mickey Mouse's ears.

Abysmal wages and working conditions that generate big profits for others aren't limited to developing countries. The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) estimates that more than one-third of New York's 6,500 garment manufacturing and production workplaces are sweatshops. Usually they are run by subcontractors, working for large manufacturers; they keep costs low by ignoring basic labor laws governing wages and hours, health and safety, child labor and industrial regulation. As many as 4,500 of the 5,000 garment production operations in Los Angeles are sweatshops, as are 80 percent in Miami and many others in Portland (Ore.), New Orleans, Chicago, San Antonio and Philadelphia, according to the GAO. In Orange County's Little Saigon near Los Angeles, \$1 an hour is a common wage, while the wage floor in New York's Chinatown is near \$2.

In many sweatshops in developing countries, young women are kept behind locked doors working on toys or garments and given amphetamines to keep them working

long hours. Their menstrual cycles are monitored to make sure they are not pregnant.

Unions and others are gearing up to fight the problem of sweatshops through the Holiday Season of Conscience, a three-month mass mobilization to affirm human rights over sweatshop abuses and to target companies that exploit workers, especially younger teenage girls. The goal is to educate consumers so they will stop buying sweatshopmade goods.

The problem is most acute in the garment industry, with some of the clothes sold by such retail giants as Kmart, Wal-Mart, Sears and J.C. Penney made for pennies by women and their teenage daughters under inhumane conditions.

"We want shoppers to understand that not every bargain is really a bargain-that goods produced by underage women and children or by captive workers earning pennies an hour come at a very high human price," says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

"In this season when people are spending money and buying gifts for friends and fam-



STACY ROSENSTOCK/IMPACT VISUALS

op it: Anti-sweatshop demonstrators

JAY MALLIN/IMPACT VISUALS

utside Washington, D.C.



ily, we hope and trust Ameri-MARK POKEMPNER cans will buy goods made under decent and humane con-

ditions," says UNITE President Jay Mazur.

side Nike's building in

Chicago

The advent of a global economy and the rush to export have given U.S. manufacturers a bonanza of profits as they shop around cashstarved developing countries to find the cheapest and least restrictive environments for manufacturing their goods, then sell them to unsuspecting consumers for hundreds of dollars more than it costs to make them. For example, Nike shoes that sell for \$120 are made for 70 to 80 cents in a foreign sweatshop. No wonder Nike had revenues of \$6.4 billion last vear.

The stakes in this battle are high. U.S. consumers spend \$184 billion on apparel each year, 60 percent of which goes for imports. By roaming the world seeking the lowest wages, the fewest labor protections and the fewest environmental regulations, companies have dragged workers into a "race to the bottom," paying workers as little as 12 cents an hour in Haiti and 31 cents in Honduras.

When consumers hear these facts and figures, they're rightly appalled. In public opinion polls, 79 percent of Americans say they would avoid a retailer they knew dealt in sweatshop goods, and 72 percent want all trade agreements to include strict rules covering human rights and environmental protection, according to the National Labor Committee (NLC), the campaign's organizer.



The Holiday Season of Conscience was launched Oct. 4 with a National Day of Conscience. In New York's garment district, Mickey Mouse carried a sign saying, "Free Mickey From Corporate Greed." Winnie the Pooh's sign proclaimed, "Animals 4 Humyn Rights." The Cookie Monster shouted, "No Justice. No Cookie." Children from Harlem's Storefront School hoisted signs saying, "Children Should Be in School.'

Mimes led street theater in San Francisco, and patrons at a Louisville, Ky., arts festival signed petitions. In Chicago, workers sewed captions onto dresses at Watertower Park. There were rallies in Baltimore's Inner Harbor; suburban Washington, D.C.; Albany, N.Y.; Burlington, Vt.; and Durham, N.C.; as well as petition drives in numerous cities.

Organizers hope to get a million signatures by Christmas on a petition urging President Clinton, Congress and the White House Task Force to End Sweatshop Abuses to adopt new policies that will ensure a living wage for all workers, independent monitoring of corporate codes of conduct and effective and enforceable workers'

For the children: 10-year-

olds Bridget Rogers (left)

and Josie Russo rehearse a

scene from "Justice, Do It"

rights at home and abroad. The petition asserts that companies should clean up their factories, hire adults only and respect local laws that require young people to attend school.

The Holiday Season of Conscience also focused attention on labor's drive to defeat President Clinton's request for "fast-track" authority to negotiate new trade deals.

"We don't think such deals should be made without adequate worker rights and environmental protections," Sweeney says. "So long as manufacturing workers in this country have to compete with workers in Haiti, Vietnam,

China and other countries that accept human misery as the norm, we will continue to see jobs sucked across our borders."

MARK POKEMPNER

Children especially are touched by the plight of exploited workers, particularly their peers who are working rather than going to school and playing. Fifth-graders at Hawes School in Ridgewood, N.J., created a play, "Justice, Do It," which dissed Disney, Nike and McDonald's for their role in exploiting children. But school officials nixed the production. As school superintendent Fred Stokley put it, "The heads of the companies...were characterized in an extreme manner as really being evil."

Hearing about the kids' plight, the 500-seat Roundabout Theatre on Broadway agreed to produce the play with the children as stars. So on Oct. 27, proud parents, friends and supporters watched the Hawes students demand a boycott of Happy Meals and denounce working conditions in developing countries.

The students wrote the play, they said, to make a difference. "These workers are not being treated as humans," said 10-year-old Han Park.

The data in this report are from No Sweat, a new book that surveys the battle against sweatshops. To order call 800-233-4830.



Yes! TO HUMAN RIGHTS No! TO SWEATSHOPS

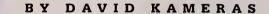
A Petition to the President of the United States, the U.S. Congress and the White House Task Force to End Sweatshop Abuses

the People believe that there is a direct link between sweatshop abuses offshore and the growth of sweatshops in the U.S., job loss and falling wages. We believe that in our global economy, human rights protections are every bit as important as corporate rights. We do not want U.S.-based multinationals pitting the U.S. worker against the poor in the developing world in a race to the bottom and competing over who will accept the lowest wages and benefits and the most miserable working conditions. We need to lift human rights standards around the world, not lower them.

We affirm the dignity of life over corporate greed.

- Children belong in school.
- Companies should clean up their factories and hire the parents and older brothers and sisters of these young people, and strictly respect local laws requiring young people to attend school
- Corporations must respect internationally recognized human and worker rights, with their actions and not just words.
- Wages must be tied to the basic cost of living in each country—which the multinationals can easily afford.
- Corporations must open their plants to independent monitoring by respected local religious and human rights organizations.
- NO to child labor.
- NO to the exploitation of teenaged girls forced to work long hours in harsh sweatshop conditions under armed guards.
- NO to workers being stripped of their rights, fired and blacklisted when they try to meet or organize to defend their rights.
- NO to starvation sub-subsistence wages.
- NO to corporations claiming that they will monitor and police their own factories.

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U.S. workers today own more than \$6 trillion in assets through their pension funds, savings plans and stock ownership and purchase plans. Although this money represents the future economic and retirement security of

millions of workers and their families, workers historically have had little or no say over how this enormous amount of capital is invested.

Workers' assets should be managed to create long-term shareholder value while creating a productive economy providing good, secure jobs. But too many of America's corporations have taken a 20-year "low road"—downsizing and restructuring workers out of their jobs and cutting wages and living standards—and they've used workers' capital to do it.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE KLUG

Now it's time to make sure workers' financial assets are managed in workers' interest. And that's why the AFL-CIO has created the nonprofit Center for Working Capital.

The center's mission—to foster policies and practices that increase worker retirement security by providing education, research and technical support—is based on three principles:

- · Workers' savings and the integrity of their retirement plans must be safeguarded.
- · The benefits of workers' accumulated wealth should accrue to them and their families.
- · Enhancing retirement security and promoting economic prosperity are complementary, not competing, goals.

"The Center for Working Capital seeks to serve as a resource for decision-makers, whether they're trustees or administrators of multibillion-dollar pension funds or individual investors who exercise control over working capital," says AFL-CIO Office of Investment Director Bill Patterson. "We want to provide the information and support that will facilitate the best possible decisions."

In addition to helping stewards of worker funds—trustees and investment and legal professionals-fulfill their fiduciary duties, the center will encourage a more active role for workers' pension funds in corporate governance through shareholder advocacy and education about pro-worker investment practices.

"We know that it is vital to our economic future that workers' capital build the economy-the economy in which companies grow

and prosper, the economy in which workers earn a living for themselves and their families, the economy that ultimately produces the real goods and services on which a secure retirement depends," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka said as he unveiled plans for the center at the Federation's biennial convention in Pittsburgh.

"The labor movement has always stood for the proposition that the only stable and prosperous economy is one where working people are prosperous and secure," he said.

The center is the latest in the Federation's recent efforts to promote stewardship of workers' capital for long-term value. In September the AFL-CIO distributed proxy voting guidelines (available from the AFL-CIO Office of Investment) to help fiduciary officers direct the management of funds through shareholder proxy authority.

The AFL-CIO is helping national unions develop stewardship programs of their own. The Office of Investment also has opposed management attacks on workers that were destroying shareholder value, and has promoted pro-worker investment strategies, such as those exercised by Union Labor Life's J for Jobs program, the Multi-Employer Property Trust (MEPT) and the Housing Investment Trust, which aim at long-term job growth.

There's big money involved. The MEPT, created with \$16 million, has grown to \$1.15 billion in assets. And the J for Jobs program received \$326 million in new commitments last year alone. This is the kind of money that empowers union funds to beat Wall Street at its own game, with workers reaping the benefits.

"Our financial potential has never been greater," Trumka says. "The challenge facing us today is to use that potential for the long-term benefit of workers."

The AFL-CIO will appoint union leaders, academic leaders and investment professionals to serve on the center's board of directors, which will oversee an executive director and staff. The center also will draw from the expertise of four practitioner advisory panels representing investment managers, fund consultants, financial advisors and legal service providers in the development of new investment mechanisms and capital strategies. It is planned as a self-sustaining separate entity that will meet its budget through program subscriptions and contributions, fees and founda-

tion grants.

Threats to Retirement Security

The need for capital stewardship is critical because the three pillars of America's retirement system—individual savings, employer-provided defined-benefit plans and Social Security—all face unprecedented challenges that threaten the retirement security of millions of workers.

Today's workers have a harder time saving for retirement because wages have stagnated for 20 years and good jobs are becoming scarcer. Meanwhile, many employers in both the public and private sectors are abandoning the responsibility and risk of providing retirement security for their workers. In the past two decades they've cut spending on retirement plans by one-third, leaving millions of workers with riskier individual savings plans—



Asset power: AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka says workers' financial potential is greatest ever

defined-contribution plans, 401(k)s, ESOPs and IRAs—in place of true defined-benefit *pension* plans. Today more than 50 percent of all workers must manage their own retirement savings. Their future security could be destroyed by economic downturns or faulty financial planning.

Social Security, the bedrock of the U.S. retirement system, is under attack in Washington, D.C., and on Wall Street. Fans of "privatization" want to cut Social Security benefits while channeling trillions of dollars into privately controlled investment funds that create billions of dollars in fees for fund managers.

The Center's Response

The center has planned a range of tools to help union officers, fund trustees and investment and legal professionals safeguard workers' capital, including:

- Conferences and seminars focusing on worker-enhancing capital strategies, investment practices, shareholder advocacy and employee ownership options—all of which boost workers' control over their financial future. One session, scheduled Dec. 8-11 at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, will provide trustees with hands-on experience covering the real-world problems they face, like challenges to defined-benefit plans, fund design issues, pro-worker investment strategies and international investment options.
- A monthly Working Capital newsletter, special reports and other resources promoting high-road investment practices.
- Databases of workers' assets, from multiemployer plans to labor banks and credit unions.
- Fee-based research and analysis services.
- Databases on investment manager and consultant relationships, investment mechanisms that serve workers' interests and directories of labor-oriented investment managers and consultants.
- Model investment guidelines for money managers.

The Center for Working Capital can be reached at 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006; phone 202-637-3900; fax 202-508-6992; e-mail invest@aflcio.org. @

n less than 10 years, efforts to contain health care costs have revolutionized the way we obtain medical care. In 1988, 71 percent of insured non-elderly Americans were in traditional fee-for-service insurance plans. They visited a doctor when they felt they needed to, and their insurance companies picked up the tab for covered services. By the end of last year 75 percent were in some form of managed care plan instead.

The result: Health care inflation has subsided, at least temporarily, but at a high price to many consumers and caregivers.

For many years, unions recognized the *potential* of managed care to promote preventive medicine and integrated health care delivery while controlling costs. But in too many



Patients, not profits: SEIU Local 144 sends the message

cases, the reality of managed care has proved far less attractive. Managed care's payment system, which gives doctors a fixed fee per enrollee, creates strong incentives to cut costs in order to increase profits. Cutting costs has meant limit-

ing consumers' choice of health care providers, curbing the amount and types of care we can get—sometimes withholding treatment options—and laying off skilled staff while contracting out their jobs.

Unions, as the largest group of health care purchasers, consumers and workers, have a unique ability to influence the cost and quality of the health care our members and our communities receive. As purchasers (through labor-

management committees, health and welfare funds and health care purchasing coalitions), we can make sure that quality is an equal factor with cost in health plan selection. As organized consumers, we can bargain for patient rights and protection. As health care providers, we can advocate,

Unions, as the largest

group of health care buyers, consumers and providers, are working to put quality

back into managed care.

both on the job and in the community, policies and practices that put patients before profits (see page 19).

In all three roles, unions are becoming more active players in health care choices.

Buying Quality Care

Affiliate unions are adopting a set of AFL-CIO principles for selecting managed care, calling for quality through public accountability, consumer choice and protection, accessible medical care, confidentiality and privacy protections and ensuring the quality of the health care workforce. They also commit labor to continue working toward the goal of universal

health care coverage.

The principles can be used most readily by health and welfare funds that directly buy health plans. But unions also are teaming up in coalitions to increase their buying clout.

At the end of the 1980s, when health care inflation hit double digits, health care purchasers began banding together to demand cost stability. Even large corporations realized that by working in coalitions with other employers they could negotiate for lower health care rates. While most of these corporate purchasers focused solely on lowering costs, a handful took a "value purchasing" approach, placing similar emphasis on preserving or improving quality of care.

Today, of approximately 150 health care purchasing coalitions, at least 20 are union-based. Most have 15 to 20 member funds, and most include construction, retail and service industry unions. A few include

school employees and public safety workers. Most of the coalitions are made up exclusively of multiemployer plans; at least two include public plans. Nearly all have formed in the past five years. The coalitions' roles vary: some exist to gather and share information about plan quality, some negotiate joint-

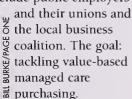


ly with providers and others purchase jointly.

By joining and forming coalitions that employ the principles of quality care, unions can use combined buying clout to influence health plans to provide accessible, high-quality care in adequately staffed facilities with trained caregivers-at controlled costs.

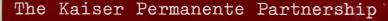
"It's up to us as health care consumers, purchasers and workers," says SEIU President Andy Stern, who chairs the AFL-CIO's Executive Council Health Care committee, "to join together in purchasing coalitions to make sure our members enroll in the best-value plans, including union plans."

The AFL-CIO Employer Purchasing Coalition in Detroit represents 70 Taft-Hartley funds as well as public employees, insuring 150,000 persons. With prescription coverage costs increasing 20 to 30 percent yearly, the coalition began in 1993 by seeking a vendor for a prescription drug card program and mail-order prescription operation. The resulting pharmaceutical plan achieved cost savings of 10 to 40 percent. Its suc-



Other alliances, such as the New Jersey Health Care Purchasing Coalition, Affiliated Health Funds in southern California and the Mid-Atlantic Health Care Cost Containment Committee in Maryland, have developed preferredprovider networks of doctors, clinics and other providers. A

In it together: Caregivers stond up for patients



n 1997, 14 affiliate unions and nonprofit Kaiser Permanente reached the health care industry's largest cooperative agreement. Kaiser has deep roots in the labor movement: the 14 unions represent nearly 64,000 of the organization's 90,000 employees, and union families make up one-fourth of Kaiser's membership.

The partnership is designed to improve the quality of care by giving workers a voice in management decisions. It ensures stable labor relations, with the employer pledging to remain neutral in organizing attempts and to recognize card checks. If implemented successfully, the initiative will boost Kaiser's ability to compete in the marketplace on the basis of its quality, and will make Kaiser a "provider of choice" for AFL-CIO unions.

Partnership committees are creating a structure to implement the agreement. @

handful of health care unions are considering union-based, nonprofit preferred-provider organizations or health maintenance organizations (HMOs); 1199NY, for example, is forming a network of providers that employ union staff to deliver managed care in the New York City area.

Bargaining for Quality Care

Unions bargain to insure more than 40 million workers and family members—more than one in four U.S. workers with employer-based coverage. Often the union is the only barrier to an employer's choosing a bottom-line, bargain-basement health care plan. To make a lasting dif-

ference in the quality of health care that members receive, unions without jointly trusteed health plans also have bargained for other ways to become continuing participants in purchasing decisions and consumer advocacy, rather than limit their role to the one-time bargaining of benefits.

Union involvement in improving health care quality has taken many forms, from negotiating a role in decision-making to promoting wellness programs.

• Since 1989, representatives from the State of Ohio and seven unions (AFSCME, SEIU, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Food and Commercial Workers, the Ohio Education Association, the Communications Workers and the Ohio State Troopers) have worked together to oversee the state's



ROBERT E. DAEMMRICH/TONY STOP

health benefits through the Joint Health Care Committee (JHCC). The unions succeeded in strengthening the minimum standards for HMOs and demanded that the state require national accreditation of any plan offered to state employees. Now the unions are urging the JHCC to produce "quality report cards" on health plans.

• CWA, through its Advisory Subcommittee on Health Care, has become a full partner with Bell Atlantic in developing, implementing and overseeing managed care—and that includes developing quality standards the health plans must meet. Along with accreditation, the



- standards include performance and access criteria. Members are surveyed about their satisfaction with the plans and receive quality report cards.
- General Motors and the Auto Workers have developed the LifeSteps program to promote healthful lifestyles and prevent illness; the program now serves 1.6 million active and retired employees and spouses and dependents. The program includes a home kit for conducting a health risk appraisal and a health care decision counseling phone line for advice.

Consumer Education and Advocacy

Some unions have found ways to educate and be advocates for health care consumers. Several have negotiated for employer-funded ombuds programs. CWA and the Electrical Workers, for example, in their contract with AT&T, negotiated two full-time positions for ombudspersons to resolve members' health care problems. CWA negotiated an additional position to help union retirees with HMOs. UAW has full-time benefit representatives under its national agreements with Chrysler, Ford and General Motors. SEIU's patient care representatives, under its contract with the Gran Care chain of 260 nursing homes and other facilities for long-term care, also monitor patient and working conditions.

To help members navigate the complexities of choosing among health plans offered by employers, some unions compile and provide information about consumer satisfaction. When Boeing management proposed dropping the company's fee-for-service indemnity plan, the Machinists surveyed union members about their experiences with that plan and with four managed care plans offered by the company, then published the results in the union newspaper. For the five plans, ratings of "poor" or "very poor" ranged from 9.6 percent to 37.6 percent, giving members valuable information to consider when selecting a plan. The indemnity plan was saved, and health plans and their doctors have become more responsive to members' quality concerns, according to the Machinists, since the union will spread the word about members' satisfaction—or lack of it.

Some unions, including the American Federation of Teachers, find that keeping complaint logs serves multiple purposes: the logs can be used in meetings with plan representatives as solid documentation of problems; the number and types of complaints can be compiled and published to help members make plan choices; and knowing that their



D. YOUNG-WOLFF/PHOTOEDIT

performance is being watched and publicized can prompt poorer plans to improve.

When public sector unions are frustrated because management is content with poor-quality plans, they frequently take their complaints to the public and to the statehouse. In 1995, Florida dumped its Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage for state workers, despite high employee satisfaction ratings. The



contract went to Unisys. AFSCME, dissatisfied with the new plan's administration, service denials and payment delays, launched a public campaign. With the union threatening a lawsuit, gathering complaints and issuing regular media alerts, the state fined Unisys for poor performance and enacted a law (which the union helped craft) creating independent oversight of the health plan and setting a deadline for Unisys to meet performance standards. Unisys ultimately threw up its hands; the contract went back to Blue Cross/Blue Shield in 1997.

Recognizing that controlling costs and protecting health care quality involve and affect entire communities, unions are crafting community-wide efforts and strategies. In Flint, Mich., and Kokomo and Anderson, Ind., the UAW surveyed the health needs and resources; a coalition then determined each community's highest health priorities and developed standards of appropriate care. In Flint, that meant developing "best practice" standards for heart catheterization and Caesarean sections. In Anderson, the results include a free asthma clinic and "best practice" standards for asthma care. The UAW has launched the Center for Community Health Initiatives, and now is looking for additional communities where the initiative can succeed.

The Role of Providers

Health care workers are on the front lines of the managed care revolution. Not only have their jobs been affected by years of cost-cutting, but they see the toll taken on patients. In response, caregivers are making their voices heard, often in coalitions with community groups, to protect patients and ensure that health care is top quality.

SEIU, AFSCME, AFT, UFCW and other unions that represent health care workers are getting better treatment for their patients by setting and enforcing care standards through negotiated patient care committees. At SEIU 1199 Northwest, registered nurses gained a voice in staffing and care quality by negotiating a nurse practice committee with Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound hospitals and clinics.

In New Jersey, unions joined consumer groups to publicize poorquality managed care and advocate improved patient protections. In 1996 the state's four largest unions representing health care workers—AFT, AFSCME, the Operating Engineers and SEIU—formed New Jersey's Health Care Worker Coalition, which launched a Patients First campaign to collect information about patients' and caregivers' experiences with managed care. The coalition worked with consumer groups to push state managed care legislation that included rights and protections for patients.

The Union Guide to Quality Managed Care details the principles of quality managed care and includes case studies. To order a copy, contact the AFL-CIO Public Policy Dept., 202-637-5172.

Where Patient Care Is the Bottom Line

By Susan Marks

hen I heard that a Columbia/ HCA executive called our hospital chain the "Wal-Mart of health care," the remark sent a shiver down my spine. As a telemetry technician at

Columbia Sunrise hospital in Las Vegas, I know that our patients need more care and attention than the "customer service" most retailers deliver.

I also know that Columbia is the largest forprofit health care provider in the country and that our hospital is setting trends for the entire health care industry. For better or worse, what happens here at Sunrise—the largest hospital in the Columbia chain—may be defining the quality of care all Americans will receive in the future.

My job at Sunrise, where I've worked for the past 10 years, is to monitor the heartbeats of critical care patients. As it stands now, I cannot effectively watch all of my patients' heart rhythms—which could change at any moment. If a change goes unnoticed, the consequences can be very serious.

It wasn't always this way. My colleagues and I have seen conditions at Sunrise deteriorate since 1993, when Columbia bought the hospital and effectively cut our staffing. While many U.S. hospitals constantly adjust the number of

nurses assigned to the patients on a floor to reflect the severity of their illnesses—or acuity—Columbia has discarded or disregarded the acuity assessment. As a result, no matter how sick our patients are, our

level of staffing remains barebones. Between 1994 and 1996, our admissions swelled by 17 percent, but the number of caregivers inched up only 1 percent.

We are always struggling desperately to deliver care to a hospital full of more and more patients. Despite our best efforts, the quality of care suffers. Over in the west wing on the fourth floor, for example, licensed practical nurse Sandra Pickney has seen the number of patients per nurse rise since Columbia bought our hospital. With the current level of staffing, she

admits that on busy days "we could have patients lying in their own feces for thirty minutes."

And Jerri Woolston, an RN who works in the inten-

sive care unit, says that because the lab is so short-staffed, the turnaround time for an urgent lab test that is supposed to be drawn immediately could take hours. "There was a six-hour delay on a coagulation study" when they were trying to restore blood flow to a patient's leg, she said. "That is a critical delay in time, where a person could lose his or her leg."

Another of my colleagues, Carol Burt, has seen her team of highly trained IV nurses nearly disappear since Columbia's takeover. A Sunrise RN for 17 years, she

Marks wants to know: With so much money flowing in, why is staffing so inexcusably low?

HEART
of the
Movement

Susan Marks, a
caregiver
employed by
America's largest
corporate health
care chain,
explains why she
and her coworkers are
turning to
SEIU for a
voice on
the job.

sees "atrocious" errors every night: the wrong intravenous solutions infused into patients' arms, infected IV sites and systemic infection. Standard practice dictates that IV dressings be

changed at least every other day, but Burt and another RN, Jolena Buchanan, say they see some go unchanged for a week or even longer.

One orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Todd Swanson, no longer practices at Sunrise. He says he saw bedridden patients "who wouldn't get bathed for three days" and others "who developed serious heel ulcers from lack of turning in bed." When at least one or two patients a week would come back to his office with complaints of long waits for pain pills and bed pans, he and most of his partners decided to send their patients to other hospitals in Las Vegas.

Last year, the Columbia/ HCA chain raked in profits of

\$1.5 billion. With so much revenue flowing into the company, my colleagues and I have to wonder: Why is our level of staffing inexcusably low?

Traditionally, caregivers like me have acted as patients' advocates when a health care bureaucracy tries to cut costs. But as our management grows more ruthless and distant, we need a new voice—a new way to advocate for our patients.

That's why the caregivers at Sunrise are coming together to form a union. We need the protection and strength of a union to restore an ethical, compassionate standard of care. We want to transform Columbia Sunrise into a hospital where our patients know the mission of healing comes first.



DOROTHY BENZ

Unpacking History

chools and other groups can borrow pieces of labor history, thanks to the new "Museum in a Suitcase" project of the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, N.J. The project lends kits containing items from the

TURN UP
THE HEAT
ON
PHELPS DODGE

Packed with history: From a Museum in a Suitcase, workers' struggles that led to strikes

museum's twentiethcentury collections on
Textiles Workers, Organized Workers, Struggles
in the Workplace and the
Immigrant's Home, based
on the Botto House.
Each kit contains about
two dozen artifacts, plus
information detailing
how the artifact was
used and why it is an
important piece of the
history of workers and
immigrants. The Strug-

gles in the Workplace kit, for example, contains picket signs, union buttons and 1935 newspapers.

Museum director Angelica Santomauro says the project, sponsored by the New Jersey Council on the Humanities, initially targeted schools, providing workshops and lesson plans for teachers of grades 4–12. But the response has grown to include nursing homes, Scout troops, libraries and local unions.

For further information about the museum, teachers' workshops or the "Museum in a Suitcase" project, call 973-595-7953.

British Lit. 101 at the Local Pub

Striking Columbia: While UAW Local 2110 struck Columbia, some professors refused to cross the line

efusing to cross picket lines during a two-week strike by Columbia University's clerical workers, professors set up more than 100 of their classes in pizza parlors, churches, bars and neighboring schools.

Members of UAW Local 2110—about 800 secretaries, cashiers, financial aid advisers and other service workers on the New York City campus—ratified a contract Oct. 31, ending the strike spawned by job security and pay issues.

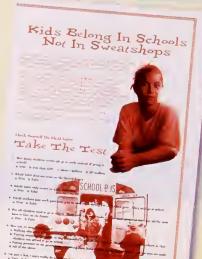
But during the strike, professors who refused to cross the line took their classes off campus.

"We're talking about the lowest paid people on campus, people we know very well," says Eric Foner, a history professor who coordinated the requests for off-campus courses.

Discovering Sweatshops

he sweatshop issue really strikes home for children, who seem to understand what it would mean to work all day rather than go to school, learn and play.

Ginny Coughlin, UNITE's student outreach sweatshop coordinator, tapped into that interest with school book covers that are an education tool for students. The book covers feature Wendy Diaz,



a 15-year-old Honduran girl who worked in a Global Fashions sweatshop. There's also a seven-question quiz about sweatshops.

The covers are extremely popular, and UNITE has had to reprint hundreds of thousands. AFT recently ordered 130,000 to use as teaching tools. For copies, write to UNITE, 1710 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019, or call 212-265-7000, ext. 821. (For more on sweatshops, see page 11.)

TALK BACK TO FIGHT BACK

ired of Rush Limbaugh and his local talk-radio clones bashing unions? The Dallas CLC fought back by hiring a former radio talk show host turned political consultant, David Paulson, to teach a class in "How to Use Talk Radio." The secret, Paulson says, is to use the free air time by calling anti-union programs to get your message out. You may not convince the host, but you might change the minds of some listeners and encourage other union folks to call. He suggests a simple one-line approach that can be used over the air: just call a talk radio show and say, "I hate NAFTA and I want every listener to pick up the phone and call Congress right now."

Duking for the Union

A good uppercut can win the match, but a union card packs a punch too.

The Boxing Organizing Committee, Federation of Professional Athletes, plans to contact the 1,200 professional boxers around the country to encourage them to support efforts to organize fighters.

"We talk to gym fighters all of the time," says Paul Johnson, chairman of the Boxing Organizing Committee.

"When we talk to underfighters on undercards, everybody, without exception, is enthused about giving fighters their own

organization. Joining the union is a great message." $\ensuremath{\hbox{$\square$}}$



Packing punch: Paul Johnson talks union to Minneapolis boxers

UNION LINE

Tis The Season:

TOYS YULE LIKE

hether you're shopping for Christmas,
Hanukkah or Kwanzaa gifts, buying for children the union way is tough. More and more of the toys, games and hobby supplies available for kids are made in sweatshops in developing countries—often by children. Take this list and check it twice when you do your holiday

shopping.

Members of the Auto Workers produce Ertl toy trucks, Matchbox cars and children's record players; Testor hobby kits and supplies; Radio Flyer children's scooters, wagons, tricycles and pedal cars; Lionel model trains and toy trains; Murray bicycles under the brand names Team Murray, Makin' Wavz, Rock Jam-

mer, Sparkles 'N Glitter, Wild Rose Canyon, Sabre, Wind River and Mountain Classic; Western Publishing children's books, games and puzzles under the Golden Books brand name; and a variety of toys at Holbrook-Patterson.

Steelworkers make Blazon Tube Co. outdoor play equipment, table and chair sets, sleds, wheelbarrows and hobby horses under the brand names Blazon and Flexible Flyer; Huffy Co. bicycles; Hoppity Ball brand toy balls, play balls, bats and punchball balloons at the Ditri Associates division of Hedstrom Corp.; and Mattel toys, games and children's vehicles (some Mattel products are imported, however; check the label for the country of origin).

Members of the Allied Novelty and Production Workers make Goldberger Doll Manufacturing and Lovee Doll & Toy Co. dolls

and stuffed toys. Paperworkers produce a variety of toys at Ohio Art; Graphic Communications Union members make Golden Books nursery books and games at the Golden Books Mini-Factory, a division of Western Publishing. Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at Dixon Ticonderoga make Dixon and Crayola children's art supplies. Members of the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers produce Welsh brand baby and doll carriages at Welsh Company of the South.

Toolbox ?

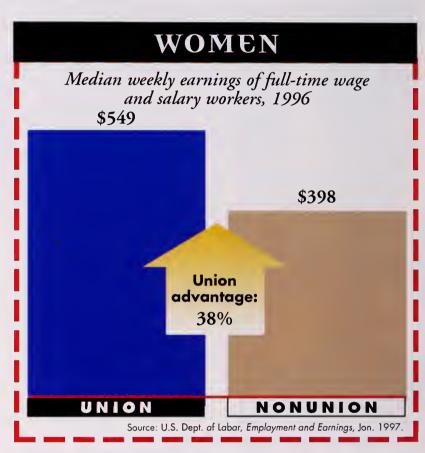
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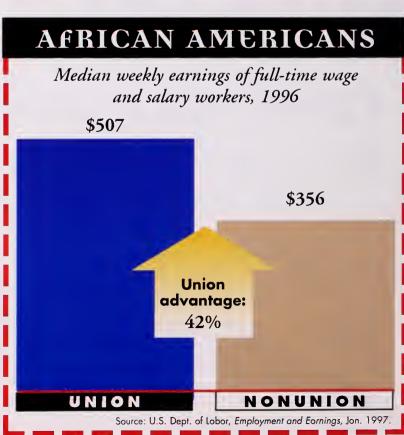
Facts and Figures on the Union Advantage

Unions increase wages for all workers, and also narrow the income gap that disadvantages women and people of color. Union workers overall earn 33 percent more than their nonunion counterparts, but for women and minorities the union advantage is even greater.

Data are from *The Union Difference: Fast Facts on Union Membership and Pay*, by the AFL-CIO Public Policy Department. For a copy, call 202-637-5166.

LATINOS Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, 1996 \$484 Union advantage: 52% NONUNION Source: U.S. Dept. of Lobor, Employment and Earnings, Jon. 1997.





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(specify for PC/CorelDraw		288
or Mac/Quark)		287



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

MIDDLE OF THE ROAD BUT YELLOW STRIPES AND DEAD

ARMADILLOS

HIGHTOWER AIMS AT MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Self-described "progressive agitator" and commentator Jim Hightower has hit the bookstores with a volume sure to unsettle "the cabal of ignorance and arrogance between Washington and Wall Street."

There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road but Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos exposes how the corporatization of the economy, government, media, science and other institutions is eroding America's basic values of justice, fairness, tolerance and opportunity.

Whatever ends up in Hightower's sights

tends to get blown away-like the unemployment rate: "Discouraged worker.' Isn't that genteel? There are about a half-a-million discouraged folks out there each month, but they don't count with the unemployment counters." Or executive pay: "CEOs have refashioned their image into economic

pure-bred stallions who must be pampered, stroked and fed only the finest, sweetest, richest alfalfa-separating themselves entirely from the mule team....No wonder many people have

noted that 'boss' spelled backwards THERE'S NOTHING IN THE is double S-O-B." Or the world's biggest economies: "The United States is at the pinnacle, of course, and Japan, Germany, the UK and China are top-ranked, as you would expect—but Mitsubishi? It is number 22, ranked ahead of Indonesia."

> Columnist Molly Ivins says Hightower is "funnier than the Texas legislature and writes like a dream." His book, priced at \$23, is published by HarperCollins.

Now you can rock-and-roll the union on.

The Bones of Contention, a Washington, D.C.-area band, has released "Power," a collection of 17 labor and freedom songs that depart from traditional acoustic arranging to present the energy of plugged-in renditions.

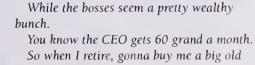
In addition to standards like "Solidarity Forever," "Which Side Are You On?" and "Sixteen Tons," the album includes several original tracks, including "Tiananmen" by the Bones' Steve Magnusen, dedicated to freedom-fighters in China and everywhere. And lead guitarist

and singer (and secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department) Joe Uehlein puts to music "Joe Hill's Last Will," written by the Wobbly organizer and songwriter before he was executed in

You also can hit the dance floor with "The Corporate Stomp":

1915.

I gotta scrimp and save just to get my lunch,



I'm gonna head down South and work upon my tan,

So I ain't gonna let 'em raid my pension plan. "Power" may be ordered for \$15 (CD) and \$10 (cassette) plus \$2 shipping and handling from the Bones of Contention, 1925 K St., N.W., Suite 250, Washington, D.C. 20006.



Change a Life BUILD THE MOVEMENT

eadership ability. Listening ability. The power to persuade and the desire to work long and hard for social justice.

Sound like someone you know?

People with these traits are potential organizers—just what the labor movement needs if it's to grow and become a stronger voice for America's working families. And the Organizing Institute is looking for them.

When you refer a talented, committed person to the Organizing Institute, you change a life—one life that in turn can change many others. The Ol's organizers-intraining get instruction from senior organizers, followed by paid internships and apprenticeships, plus placement help.

Send This Person an Application!

I think this person has organizing potential. Please send an Organizing Institute application to:

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Daytime Phone

Evening Phone

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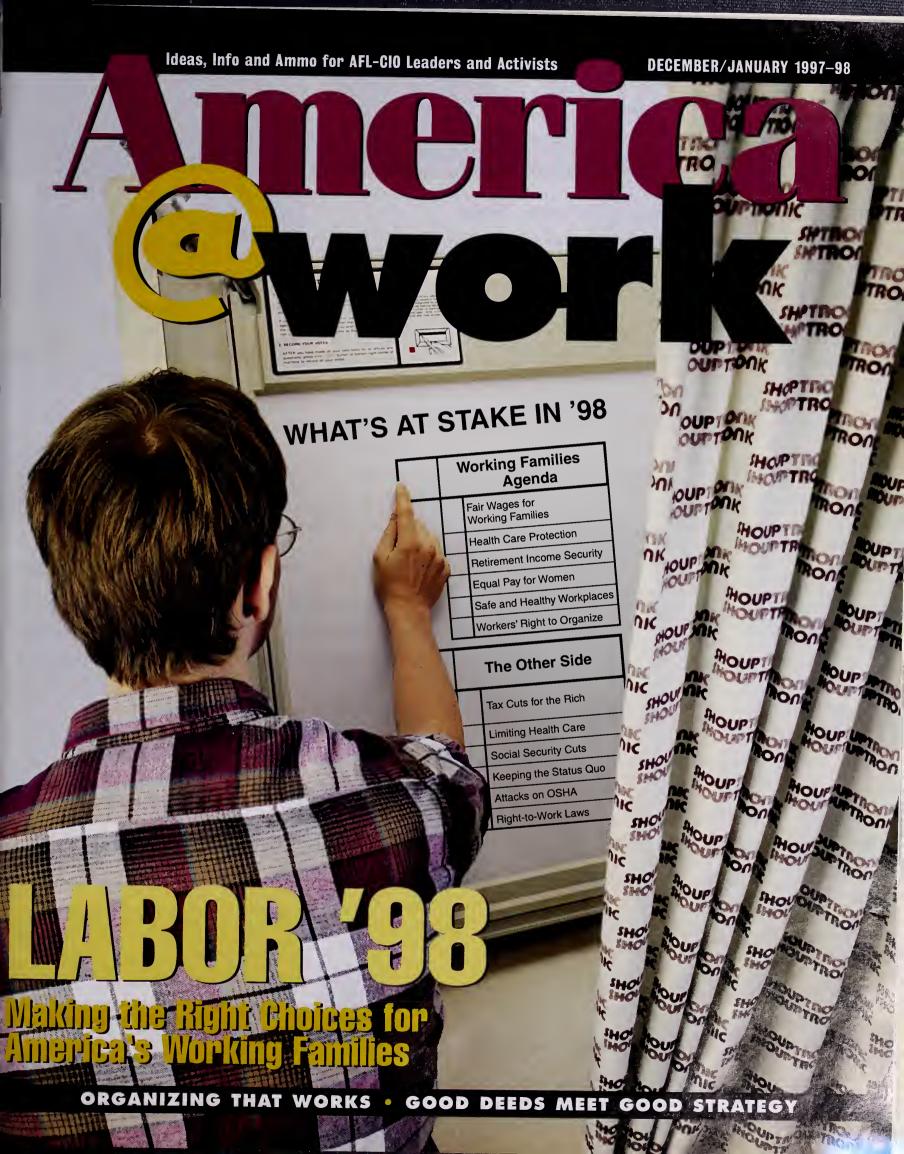
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Please clip or copy this coupon, fill it out and send it in an envelope to the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Ol candidates are everywhere—on shop floors, at union halls, on college campuses and in community groups working for



change. Help us find one and you help build the movement.





Ideas and Views From You

Due to the holidays, this is a combined December/January issue of America@work. Our regular monthly schedule will resume with the February issue.

"A GREAT RESOURCE"

@"The Organizing Institute is a great resource, providing well-trained, dynamic organizers. Beatriz Johnston-Hernandez came to our staff ready to go. Not only did she have a good background in the skills needed for effective worker contact, but also she understood the commitment and work ethic required to be successful. We have had other staff members serve as O.I. three-day training session trainers. This has provided quality interaction with other talented organizers and would-be organizers, and it has given us an opportunity to hone our organizing and staff evaluation skills."—Kevin O'Connor, organizing director, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2, San Francisco.

ORGANIZE TO END EXPLOITATION

"Thank you for speaking out on the scam of 'independent' contractors. "Twelve years ago I was hired to work part time at a hospital as a registered respiratory therapist while I was in school (the hospital was non-unionized, but 'professional' people like RNs or RRTs like myself were often not eligible to become unionized at hospitals then). I had to go through all the normal personnel procedures, was issued my employee ID and was assigned shifts. I had no control over my hours, no negotiation on my wages and no control over my work assignment. I worked just like everybody else. I didn't get any benefits because I was part-time, so I never had any idea I was an 'independent' contractor. "It wasn't until the end of the year—when my tax statement looked different than usual—

that I found out (from my tax accountant) that I was an 'independent' contractor! Because of other tax losses I had that year, my yearly income was \$0 but I had to pay almost

\$300 for the 'employer' contribution of Social Security.

"I believe it is only by being organized and united that we can put a stop to exploitation like this."—Karen Miles, ICWUC-UFCW, Cincinnati, Ohio



How is your union gearing up for Labor '98? What issues do you expect your members to mobilize around?

Write, fax or e-mail your thoughts about this month's Say What? Responses will appear in a future issue.

America@work

815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 Phone: 202-637-5010; Fax: 202-508-6908; e-mail: atwork@aflcio.org

America@work has a new, simpler e-mail address: atwork@aflcio.org

When you see unions@work

and our

members@work

and collective power in our

communities@work.

that's when you see

NO SWEAT

@"Our local has convinced the Belmont County commissioners in Ohio to pass a resolution that city uniforms not be purchased if they are made under sweatshop conditions. We are now approaching other counties to get them to pass similar resolutions. Our long-range goal is to try and get the school systems to sign on, too." Sharon Porter, recording secretary, UNITE Local 590, Bellaire, Ohio

UNITY WORKS

@"Wilkinsburg Residents Against Profiteering (WRAP) would like to thank the Pennsylvania State Education Association (NEA), the Steelworkers, the Carpenters, the Plumbers, the Iron Workers, SEIU and hundreds of community residents for all their help and support in the threeyear battle by our town to regain control of our public schools and public treasury.

"On Nov. 4, Wilkinsburg (Penn.) voters swept pro-privatization/pro-charter school board members out of office by: 70 percent margin. In a near record-setting turnout, Wilkinsburg voters stuck to the issues and rejected one of

> the nastiest, dirtiest campaigns in our community's history. The backbone of our successful election campaign is the coalition....Unity works!"—Denise Edwards, newly elected borough council member, Wilkinsburg, Penn.



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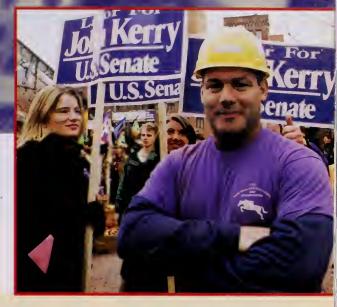
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TEACHER UNIONS COLLABORATI ON MAJOR ISSUES

he America Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the unaffiliated National Education Association (NEA) have formed a national joint council to work on school infrastructure, school safety and discipline and teacher quality. The joint council is made up of

President Bob Chose ond AFT President 15 elected state Sondro Feldmon and local leadonnounce notional joint council ers of each union. This is

the first such national collaboration between the two unions.

"These issues directly affect our ability to give all our students a first-rate education," says Sandra Feldman, president of AFT. "We are trying to lead our unions

down a new path, joining forces on behalf of chil-

dren, seeking partnerships instead of conflict with management and taking responsibility for our profession."

In it together: NEA

AFT won a November election for 9,596 professionals in the Dallas school system,

making this the single largest group of teachers to choose union representation in 20 years. The Alliance of Dallas Edu cutors, an affiliate of the AFT, will represent classroom teachers, school librarians

and counselors.



All smiles: Allionce/AFT oreo coordinators are beaming ofter AFT win

The AFT affiliate, which was in a five-way contest for the right to represent the Dallas Teachers, won 58 percent of the vote

The victory is notable not only for its size, but also because Texas public employees have not yet won collective bargaining rights. @



Great ride: Dollas educotors voted to fly high with AFT

Will California Vote to Silence Workers?

California initiative taking direct aim at working families is a preview of anti-worker initiatives likely to come at the state and federal level. The measure would require unions to get members' written permission each year to use a small portion of dues money for political activities. In clear retaliation for organized labor's ongoing organizing and political success, the Republican Governors Association—prompted by California Gov. Pete Wilsonrecently threw its support behind so-called "payroll protection" initiatives.

The California measure is similar to the Paycheck Protection Act, pending federal legislation proposed by Republicans in Congress.

California's "Campaign Reform Initiative" is being sold to voters by a few right-wing Republicans and the Washington, D.C.-based Americans For Tax Reform. The group reportedly gathered and filed 740,000 signatures with the state election board. It takes 439,000 valid signatures to put the measure before the voters next June.

The California Labor Federation currently is appealing a negative ruling on its suit to invalidate 120,000 of the signatures that were collected by mail because the form included a solicitation from Americans For Tax Reform President Grover Norquist seeking "your largest possible contribution." The packet of "official State of California Election Documents" included a letter from Wilson requesting that voters sign and return these

"official" documents within 24 hours to help him "end a massive political shakedown..."

Norquist, according to the Washington Post, hopes to raise \$10 million next year to lobby for passage of such measures in every state.

Bill Camp, assistant political director of the California Labor Federation, called the initiative "diabolical" because it would let employers know which employees contributed to union political action.

The state federation affiliates are circulating petitions by the California Professional Firefighters and the California Congress of Seniors: one would ban all corporate contributions to political candidates; the other would sunset all business tax loopholes and refund to taxpayers the money collected from closing those loopholes. @





Mobilizing for Safe Jobs

ore than 800 local union safety and health committee members, local officers and stewards at the AFL-CIO National Safety and Health Conference in Cincinnati, Nov. 16–19, learned more about mobilizing and organizing workers around job safety issues and how to advance job protections with the current anti-worker environment in Congress.

Participants marched through downtown Cincinnati to the office of Sen. Mike DeWine (R) to let Ohioans know their senator is co-sponsoring the anti-worker SAFE (Safety for Employees Advancement) Act to "deform" the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The rally also celebrated the November workers' compensation victory, in which the state's voters rejected a law that would have undercut the state's workers' compensation protections severely. The Ohio AFL-CIO had gathered more than 414,000 signatures to force a referendum on the measure. This was the first time in 58 years that an Ohio law had been subjected to a referendum and not since 1920, when voters rejected a prohibition on liquor sales, had a referendum been successful, according to the Columbus Dispatch.

Conference participants also helped Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 12 gather signatures in a drive to organize food and beverage workers at the Regal Hotel.

Unions Support Day of Action

n December 10, unionists from across the country fired up Street Heat for the National Day of Action for Welfare/Workfare Justice, sponsored by Jobs With Justice.

Activities included a teach-in in Des Moines, Iowa, and protests out-

side corporate headquarters in states that have privatized their welfare systems.

Meanwhile,
AFSCME is working
with the Solidarity
Sponsoring Committee
in Baltimore to lobby
for living wages for
former welfare recipients. The union wants
monies saved from
welfare reform by the
State of Maryland to be
used to create jobs that
pay \$7 to \$10 an hour.

In addition, the activists want education to count as "work activity" so that welfare recipients don't lose benefits while attending college or technical school. Supporters, who lobbied the governor in November, hope a bill will be approved in January.



nions are winning more elections in South Carolina this year. The UAW won two, in Carlisle and Orangeburg, during November, and the Teamsters gained a victory in Greenville in October.

Unions Gain

Ground in S.C.

Workers at Webb Forging in Carlisle voted 46–16 for UAW representation while the A.E. Goetze plant voted 99–72 to remain a part of the UAW. The IBT organized 26 workers at the Atlanta Motor Lines. The recent victories widen the margin of labor elections in a state that has the least unionized work force. From January through August 1997, unions won 38.5 percent of elections, compared with 31.3 percent in 1994.

"Unions go where there's a need for them," says Donna Dewitt, president of the state federation. "The main reason people want to unionize now is that they do not see a place where they can air their grievances fairly," she says. Grievance issues accounted for 67 percent of pro-union elections; wage and benefits issues for 33 percent of

the wins.

On the Horizon

n a huge show of support for 275 workers who have struggled for a year and a half to secure an industrywide contract, flight attendants from 25 airlines joined supporters from the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and the Steelworkers Oct. 14 to march in front of the Portland, Ore., ticket office of Horizon Air.

The rally showed management "that we are serious about getting a new contract and that we have broad support throughout the labor movement in our demand to be treated fairly," says Terry Ballestrazze, a Horizon Air flight attendant and president of the Flight Attendants' local council in Portland.

One of the nation's largest com-

muter carriers, Horizon pays starting salaries slightly above the minimum wage, resulting in some employees needing to seek government food, medical and housing assistance for their families. It has resisted a 10-year effort by its employees to gain an agency shop contract, a standard arrangement in the industry. Nonetheless, a recent week-long membership drive resulted in a 40 percent increase in union membership.

If a contract isn't reached, the union has promised to engage in a full-scale CHAOS (Create Havoc Around Our System) campaign of intermittent work stoppages, a tactic used with great success at Alaska and United. The informa-

tional stage of CHAOS kicked off last August.

In its October meeting, the AFA board of directors decided to spend an additional \$1.26 million a year to organize new members. The decision, says AFA President Pat Friend, means a "significant increase" in the amount of money earmarked specifically for organizing—close to six times the previous amount. A big portion of the money will be used to organize Delta's 20,000 flight attendants.

Listen up, Horizon: AFA President Pat Friend rallies workers in Portland, Ore.



Currents

Avondale Stalls Again

orkers who voted for union representation at Avondale Industries four years ago were forced to wait still longer when the defense contractor—which has used every legal loophole in the book to avoid negotiating with its workers—appealed a National Labor Relations Board decision ordering management to bargain.

In October, the NLRB upheld its earlier decision certifying the New Orleans Metal Trades Department as the workers' bargaining representative. The board also barred what the company—in its latest stalling tactic to extend management's refusal to recognize union legitimacy at three Louisiana shipyards—calls new evi-

dence. Avondale was directed to begin bargaining, furnish information legally requested by the union last May and post a notice indicating its compliance.

In a stunning display of disregard for the voice of workers, in October the company terminated Betty Dumas, a 36-year-old mother of three, after she wrote to President Al Bossier complaining of

description as the only major nonunion shipyard in America. "I know, you know and the National Labor

her employer's self-

Board of the United States knows that we the workers at Avondale Shipyard voted to be represented by the union about four years ago," she said, reminding Bossier that the NLRB "certified the workers' 'yes' vote to form a union at Avondale Shipyards."

The company was the target of a Street Heat action Nov. 6, when workers wearing "Justice for Avondale" T-shirts joined other activists in demonstrating and handbilling outside a New Orleans trade show where Avondale was an exhibitor.

"We remain disgruntled, both with the company and [with] the process that has taken four years, and these workers are still denied satisfaction,"

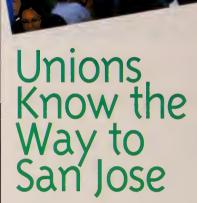
AFL-CIO Metal Trades

Department President

John Meese says.

Pink slip: Mother of three Betty Dumas shows termination notice that followed her complaint

METAL TRADES DEPARTMENT



he city of San Jose, Calif., has joined Food and Commercial Workers
Local 428 in supporting a consumer boycott of a Super Kmart store. The city council voted 6-5 on Oct. 21 to support the union and the community in a campaign for improved benefits.

ORGANIZING

SEIU Five hundred sixty-four workers at Interim Health Services in Chicago will be represented by SEIU Local 880. The win comes on the heels of a combined blitz by SEIU Locals 1, 46, 73 and 880 in the last 10 days of the October organizing campaign. Interim Health Services, a home care company, ran a mean antiunion campaign that included the arrest of Local 880 member organizers. Meanwhile, some 200 licensed practical nurses and technical workers voted to join SEIU Local 627 in Youngstown, Ohio. In Minneapolis, 125 workers at Green Acres Nursing Home voted to be represented by SEIU Local 113 while workers at Ebenezer Luther Hall voted 73-30 for representation by the local.

TEAMSTERS In a joint effort by Teamsters Local 714 and Steelworkers Local 275, 800 workers at Ryerson/Tull steel services in Chicago now have union representation. The IBT will represent 525 workers and the USWA will represent 275 workers. The unions will jointly negotiate a bargaining contract and divide the responsibility for administering the agreement. Meanwhile, 100 waste workers at Barker Brothers Waste in Union City, Ky., have IBT representation. The workers, who stuck together in the face of an aggressive company campaign, received help from Local 236 and UPS Teamster volunteer organizers. Pilots at the Pacific Northwest-based Horizon Air also voted for the IBT. This was the second union election at Horizon, involving 550 pilots, after the National Mediation Board ruled that management

had tainted the first balloting and ordered a rerun.

workers employed by Service America at the Miami Convention Center voted for representation with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees. In Orlando, 250 workers employed by Spring Foods at Coronado Springs Hotel gained union recognition through accretion. The new members work in room service, the food court, a Mexican restaurant and the employee cafeteria.

AFSCME More than 500 home care workers at Home Assistance Personnel, Inc., in the Bronx won the right to be represented by AFSCME District Council 1707. The workers said they needed union representation because they were making the minimum wage with no medical

benefits or pension and little sick or vacation time. Los Angeles County Court clerical workers are now members of AFSCME Council 36. The new members form one of the largest units in the state, with 1,100 members.

NATCA Engineers at the Federal Aviation Administration voted 639–498 to join the Air Traffic Controllers. The union has been seeking members outside its traditional membership base with the hopes of bringing a more effective voice to aviation and safety issues.

BC&T After a 12-year battle, Stroehmann's Bakery workers will have a voice in their workplace. Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers Local 6 in Philadelphia will represent 180 workers at the bakery.

Rebuilding Builds a Local

n a wonderful example of what can happen when an organizing program is rebuilt, SEIU Local 362 in Orlando, Fla., won a November election, 462-329, for a unit of 1,500 classified school workers employed by the Osceola County schools.

Two years ago the local represented only 1,400 workersall at Walt Disney World. With school workers in Osceola and Lake counties joining SEIU. the union could increase its membership by 3,000.

"We went from a non-organizing local to a shift in our vision. We now dedicate 15 to 20 percent of our resources towards organizing new members and signing up members in our existing units," says James Sombelon, organizing director for the local.

Member-organizers from Disney and Lake County, and SEIU Local 1227 members in West Palm Beach helped with the campaign.

tudents of labor are now getting credit where credit

The Maryland Higher Educa-National Labor College of the George Meany Center for Labor Studies accreditation as a fouryear independent college. The college offers a range of educaexpanded degree program with seven areas: labor studies, labor safety and health, labor history, labor education, union administration, organizational dynamics and political economies.

For information, call 1-800-GMC-4CDP or e-mail 71112. 2453@compuserve.com.

OUT FRONT

et ready. Our unions and the working people we represent are going to face serious attacks this year.

Big business and the politicians' big businesses fund are furious that the voice of working families is growing and making a difference. Wins for and by America's workers—such as the defeat of fast track trading authority and the 1996 replacement of anti-worker incumbents with pro-people candidates-hit monied special interests and their representatives hard.

We can count on revenge. We can see it in attempts to cast our successes as steamroller efforts by "Big Labor." We know that antiworker measures like fast track and

anti-worker candidates are, in fact, conquered by "Little Labor" educated and mobilized rank-and-file members. It was a whole lot of "Little Labor" that made the phone calls, turned out at the rallies and mailed the postcards to urge members of Congress to reject fast track. And it's rank-and-file members-not so-called union bosseswho make the difference at the polls.

Whatever

Don't Duck!

By John J. Sweeney

The attacks on labor and working families will come from several directions. A big-money campaign is under way already to limit the ability of unions to represent members through political education and action, and the Republican governors recently endorsed such limits. One business group is backing a ballot initiative to silence union members' voices in California (see page 4) and trying to raise \$10 million to take the crusade into other states. Insidious proposals like the TEAM Act to allow company unions and axing the 40-hour work week and overtime pay didn't make it through Congress last session but are sure to reappear in 1998. Then there's the American Worker Project, an ad hoc child of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. Sounds innocent, but watch for flying arrows. Although purportedly looking for ways to prepare the work force for the twenty-first century, the subcommittee more likely will try to prepare workers for less security, fewer benefits and easier domination by bosses. In its preview hearing October 29, invited speakers praised the benefits of part-timing and contracting out jobs and—of course easing government regulations on business.

What should working people and their representatives in unions do during the barrage? The last thing we should do is duck. We've got to march through the mess, strong and together, propelled by our mission and fortified by our successes. We cannot back down or retreat to a defensive posture. The AFT organizing victory in Dallas and hundreds of other organizing wins show we have what it takes to grow and thrive. The UPS strike showed we are willing and able to stand up for what's right—and to win. The Frontier strike—six years with no picket-line crossing—showed we have staying power.

So let's keep doing what we do best—fighting for working families on the job, in government, in the global economy and in every state and community across the country.

LABOR COLLEGE GETS CREDIT

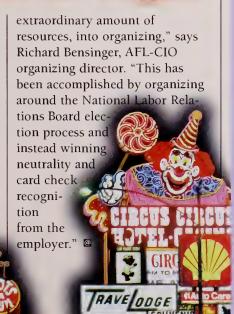
is due.

tion Commission has granted the tional opportunities, including an

Grand Win in Veg

n overwhelming majority of Culinary Workers at the MGM Grand have signed card checks to be recognized by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 226. The new contract will cover 3,100 current employees and will grow to 4,000 employees by next year. The victory brings to 8,000 the number of new workers brought under contract by HERE in Las Vegas during the past year.

"This is one of the best examples of the connection between changing to organize and the right to organize in that the local has put 42 percent of its udget, which is an









CHARLES PORIDEALI/LISW/

abor '96 was a powerhouse campaign that drew 2.3 million more union voters to the polls than in the previous presidential election, kicked 18 anti-worker representatives out of office and came within 10,000 votes of stripping

Newt Gingrich of his speakership and majority.

How will unions top that in 1998?

Labor '98 will be bolstered by the movement's new grassroots strength—seen at its best in November's defeat of fast track trade authority backed by the White House, the Republican congressional leadership and big business. We're putting more organizers in the field earlier this year, focusing on a Working Families Agenda that reaches beyond the labor movement to all working families, putting additional effort into state elections, powering up the Working Women Vote drive and pushing to register 4 million union-household members who are not currently registered to vote.

The stakes are high: The outcome of the 1998 elections will either strengthen working families and bring America closer to social and economic justice or pave the way for anti-worker agendas in Congress, state houses and governors' mansions throughout the country.

In the U.S. Senate, a pick-up of just five seats by anti-worker forces would make that body filibuster-proof, preventing senators such as Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) from blocking legislation to help corporations and the wealthy at the expense of working people. Conversely, a switch of just 11 seats would dismantle the anti-worker leadership of the U.S. House.

For workers, the potential for big wins and losses exists in the states as well. Thirty-six governor's races and two dozen state legisla-

tures are up for grabs, and dozens of antiworker initiatives will be on ballots around the country. Fueled by big business, many states are looking at adopting right-to-work laws, gutting workers' compensation programs, privatizing state services and workfare, using public funds for private schools and restricting union political activity and collective bargaining rights.

Workers' Voices at the Grassroots Level

Although Labor '96 activists worked in 102 congressional districts, 14 Senate races and two gubernatorial contests, Labor '98 activities will be far more extensive and put more people in place earlier, with the first wave starting in April. These activists will be trained as issue organizers and political organizers by the AFL-CIO's new National Labor Political Training Center.

Labor '96 focused primarily on House races, but Labor '98 will take a more "layered" approach. Priority states will have some combination of a governor's race, Senate contest, several House battles, state legislature races and important ballot initiatives.

The coordinators of Labor '98 will be charged with creating strong mobilization operations to activate union members, recruit volunteers and offer nuts-and-bolts political training for union members.

Our Agenda—and Theirs

In talking with voters about important election issues, Labor '98 will emphasize a working families agenda. This agenda calls for a living wage for all Americans, health care coverage for millions of uninsured families, retirement security through decent pensions and Social Security that has been protected, improved education for our children, passage of fair tax proposals, equal pay and proportional benefits for all workers regardless of hours or category of employment, child care quality and affordability, safe and healthy workplaces and workers' right to organize:

Big business, Republican congressional leaders and other anti-worker warriors have a much different agenda, driven partially by greed and partially by the desire for revenge for labor's past political and legislative successes. Its planks include:

- Steep Medicare and Social Security cuts to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations;
- Privatization of the public sector;
- Trade agreements that sell out workers and the environment for bigger corporate profits;
- Right-to-work laws;
- Dismantling workers' health and safety protections;
- Eliminating overtime pay and the 40-hour week:
- Attacking collective bargaining through the Team Act; and
- Restricting union dues to squelch workers' voices in the political process.

To help working families decide whom to support, Labor '98 coordinators will develop and distribute profiles contrasting candidates' stands on these and other important national, state and local issues.

A key feature of Labor '98 will be keeping the focus on issues rather than on partisan politics. To facilitate this goal, field activists



will develop labor-led coalitions separate from any political party. A quick look at the makeup of the U.S. House shows why this is critical. A group of about 50 Democrats are somewhat conservative, have stronger ties to business and are less reliable on important working family issues. On the other hand, working people get some support from a group of 25 to 35 moderate GOP members, some from heavily unionized districts.

"We have Republicans among our members. We have Democrats among our members, and we support candidates on the basis of where they stand on the issues that affect our members," says Teachers President Sandra Feldman. "The needs of working families for good health care... for quality education and decent housing-those are the special interests that we are about."

Register Folks, Then Go GOTV

Although information on working family issues is paramount in persuading union members to pull the voting lever in their own self-interest, they can't pull that lever unless they are registered. Seven million union members are not registered to vote. Toss in the members of their households and the total exceeds 16 million potential working-family voters—who could make quite a difference on election day. Labor '98 will include a huge push to register union members and others in their households, featuring workplace registration drives, neighborhood efforts, mail registration and even phone banking to motivate members to register.

To make a difference at the polls, we've also got to get out the vote (GOTV). A look at one 1994 Ohio race shows how big a difference getting out the union vote can make. In the Sixth District Ted Strickland (D), a staunch and longtime supporter of working families, lost to Frank Cremeans by just 3,402 votes in 1994. Two years later, Strickland won by 6,096 votes. Why? Because union turnout jumped from 58 percent of eligible union voters to 70 percent.

This year, under Labor '98's mobilized GOTV plan, turnout efforts will be a bit different. Workplace captains—trained volunteer activists-will distribute voter guides that will

Workers' voice: Union members rallied, protested and phone-banked to make their voices heard in recent elections

AMERICA REC ILL

list where each candidate stands on key working family issues.

And we won't wait until election eve to rally our members. Unions will be encouraged to stage issue-based rallies, mobilizing members around what's important to them-topics such as pensions, wages and health care. We'll also be rallying around the right to organize and asking candidates to pledge their support. Rather than standing at the polls on election day, union activists will head into neighborhoods to turn out workingfamily voters.

Working Women Vote

In 1996, the AFL-CIO's Working Women Vote campaign mobilized union and nonunion women around pocketbook economic issues. Some 300 Working Women Vote events reached about 1 million women, encouraging them to make their voices heard at the polls.

TEN RULES FOR TALKING TO MEMBERS ABOUT POLITICS

When it comes to politics, members want information—not orders from their unions. They want to know about issues-not partisan agendas. When communicating with members about politics, keep in mind these pointers based on opinion research by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AFL-CIO:

- Unions should downplay partisan rhetoric and instead stress their role as an independent voice for working people.
- Issues come first. Candidates are second. Members want political action to be about them and their needs, rather than about individual candidates or parties.
- Members want information, not voting instructions—which they view with an indifference that often borders on resentment. Before members can respect an endorsement, they need to see issue positions, voting records and other information that will help them make up their
- Members want unions to represent their interests as workers, which is best accomplished by advancing a populist economic agenda.

- · Political action decisions, such as endorsements, should encourage participation and highlight union responsiveness. Rank-and-file members should be encouraged to put in their two cents' worth, through membership surveys, public hearings with candidates and toll-free numbers on print material and ads.
- Political action should be about empowering members to make a difference. Members are looking for opportunities to make their voices heard.
- · Unions should respect members' skepticism about politics and politicians and act as watchdogs who hold elected officials accountable.
- We have to use methods of communication that work in today's world. Union newspapers and magazines reach only a portion of our members. Direct mail, radio and television have much wider reach.
- Unions must address members' core values and use accessible language to do so. Values are what drive our members to political action-not policy-wonk jargon and insiderisms.
- · One size doesn't fit all. We should tailor our messages to specific audiences, such as women, workers in different employment sectors and young members. @

In 1998, Working Women Vote plans to hold 1,000 events that could reach millions of working women. "We will be in every community. No politician will be able to turn around without seeing a Working Women Vote button, and

and 4 percent of governors. African Americans make up 12 percent of the population, but only 1 percent of the Senate and 9 percent of the House, and African Americans hold no governorships.



BILL BURKE/PAGE ONE

they'll know that working women are voting on real political issues," says Delores Spears of AFSCME District Council 36 in Los Angeles.

2000 in 2000

Labor '98 also will increase the likelihood that members can look for the union label when they vote. The National Labor Political Training Center is building skills for union members who want to participate in the electoral process, providing fund raising, campaign budgeting and training in public speaking. The goal: 2,000 union members on ballots in the year 2000.

As AFL-CIO President John Sweeney puts it, "Far too many elected officials favor corporate interests over those of working families. We need more elected officials who represent and understand what working men and women face every day."

A look at Congress—and state houses aren't much different—reveals a dearth of working folks, women and people of color. Business people and bankers account for 181 members of Congress, and there are 172 lawyers. Women constitute 51 percent of the population, but just 12 percent of the House, 9 percent of the Senate

Up Against Big Bucks

Unions' role in the 1996 elections stirred up a great deal of controversy, which was fueled by our enemies' distortions about union election spending. But labor really was a small player in the high-stakes, high-dollar campaign donation game. The Center for Responsive Politics reported that business interests outspent labor groups by 17-to-1. In "soft money" contributions (donations that don't go directly to the candidate, but to the party or allied organization), corporate America once again gave much, much more than labor, by a

ratio of 19-to-1. During the last election cycle, a total of \$1.6 billion was raised; only 3.75 percent of that, or \$60 million, came from labor.

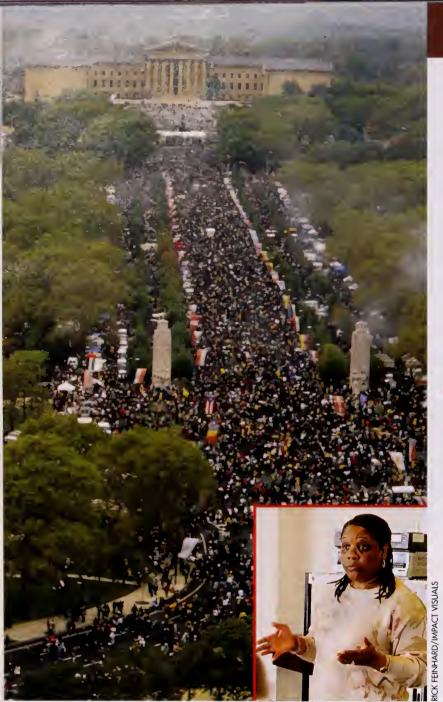
Expect more of the same in 1998. The National Journal reports that the Business Roundtable has proposed tripling its dues so that it can "mount sustained multiyear campaigns for public and congressional support." The Roundtable is one of 33 business groups that form The Coalition: Americans Working for Real Change, which is gearing up for the elections and to advance its pro-business agenda in Congress. The National Association of Manufacturers has asked 750 member companies to come up with \$250,000 a year for two years to join the coalition, or to donate \$50,000 for a seat on the advisory board. Business again will be revving up to promote issue campaigns: Another coalition—which includes the Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Association of Health Plans, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and the Health Insurance Association of America—is raising \$1 million for a health care advertising campaign (remember the 1994 "Harry and Louise" ads that helped scuttle health care reform?), says the Washington Post. The American Insurance Association has asked its members for \$1 million in contributions, according to the National Journal; the National Federation of Independent Business is spending more than \$1 million on its crusade to abolish the Internal Revenue Service; and the National Retail Federation is funding a long-term, free-trade campaign and backing most-favored-nation trading status for China.

There is no doubt that labor's enemies also will run well-heeled and aggressive campaigns against union election activities. They'll use Capitol Hill, television ads and other venues to try to derail working families' voice in government and keep the political playing field slanted in favor of business and the wealthy.

It's up to every union member, local, and labor council, on the state, federal and international levels to make sure the good guys-men and women-win.

UNION TURNOUT

Overall, fewer increased.	How Many Americans Voted?	6 than in 1992—but turnout fro What Percentage of Them Were Members of Union Households?	How Many Union Votes?
1996	96 million	23%	22.08 million
1992	104 million	19%	19.76 million
	-8 million		+2.32 million



LIZ GILBERT-SYGMA

On a rainy Saturday morning in October on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, hundreds of thousands of African American women from across the country began a journey that would take them much farther than the two miles down Benjamin Franklin Parkway to the Philadelphia Art Museum, where they heard speakers such as Maxine Waters and Winnie Mandela extol the virtues of sisterhood and collective action. For these women, this was a meeting with their identities and their futures. America@work asked Beverlye Neal, president of AFSCME Local 2401 in Washington, D.C., to give her personal account of the march.

"We Can Come Together and Do Something"

One Union Woman's Thoughts on the Million Woman March

BY BEVERLYE NEAL

hen I think of the Million Woman March, the one thing I remember most is the feeling I got when I approached the area where we were going to depart for the rally. I saw a sea of women. It almost made me want to cry. I stood together with the other members of my local and we just hugged one another. It was absolutely breathtaking. We were jubilant.

Four busloads of women from my local went to Philadelphia. My fiancé went along—he was the only man on my bus. It was important that he attend so he could understand that African American women don't fit the stereotype that says "you can't get women together because they're too strong-willed and unorganized."

The black woman is left out of a lot of decisions because of that stereotype. I was on that bus to change that. My issues have always been women's issues. The stigma of single parenting has always been geared toward the black female. We're led to believe that if our black children are raised by a single female, they are doomed to failure. We dispelled that myth that all is lost with black women. And that's important to me because I have had to deal with that attitude. I raised four sons as a single mother, and when I tell people that, they look at me in a certain way, as though I had done something wrong. But all my sons went to college—one is an engineer in Florida, another is an ironworker welder in California and the other two are in college now. So I did all right by myself, and there are a lot of black women in that situation.

The other important issue is the voting strength of the African American woman: When you look at the pictures of all those women, there it is. And I think it was important for black labor women to be there because we don't get respect in our own unions. The good ole boys' network treats women, especially black women, like we don't have the capability to think and make decisions. I think they fight a lot dirtier with women because they think we'll give up a lot easier.

Another thing, unions ought to be doing more for those women who are on welfare and have to go to work. The unions keep saying they need the minimum wage, but we ought to be trying to make these women self-sufficient. We ought to be fighting for union jobs for these women and putting them in those jobs when and where they are available.

Some of us who went to the march are trying to arrange a conference in 1999 on the role of black women in the millennium. African American women have followed the white women's agenda. We have enough issues in our community—crime, teenage pregnancy, inadequate education, job opportunities, drugs, school dropouts. We need to get back to basics in our neighborhoods. We care about our people, too, and the march showed that we can come together and do something.

IZING Jnion aders

BY MURIEL COOPER

As a union leader, you have made the commitment to build a successful organizing program. Now comes the hard part. What really works? What are the best ways to use staff, members and resources for big results?

Take some tips from those who have been there, done that and won. Here's a look at effective strategies, based on the experiences of organizers and unions that have created successful organizing programs and campaigns.

ORGANIZING
THAT WORKS:



FOR UNION LEADERS

PREANIZING THAT WORKS

Tip 1: Research Your Industry and Your Targets

Union leaders need to understand the industry and potential organizing targets to win organizing campaigns and contracts. Remember: The goal is winning a contract, not just winning a recognition campaign. Leaders need to think strategically about how their industry is changing and what they want their locals to become over time. It makes sense to hire or consult with skilled strategic researchers and ask members about their knowledge of their industry.

"We put an organizing assessment in place to restore viability to the local. We have to hold on to our market share," says Lennie Wyatt, president of Food and Commercial Workers Local 1099 in Ohio. "We knew we had to



rebuild our market share to avoid contract concessions. In 1991, we had 33 cents of the food dollar. Now, we have 75 cents," he says.

Knowing the market is the key for the AFL-CIO's Building Trades Organizing Project (BTOP), a multicraft, industrywide local organizing campaign directed at construction workers in Las Vegas. "We know the Las Vegas construction industry is booming," says Robert Georgine, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department at the AFL-CIO. "What we are doing is addressing a whole market at once by segments instead of contractor by contractor. Our intent is to increase our unions' market share so that Las Vegas construction workers, and their families, have a better standard of living," he says.

The Steelworkers also are using locals to

rebuild market share. "It's about targeting the steel industry," says Bob Callahan, organizing director of the Steelworkers. "We are going to our members and asking them to use a systematic effort to organize in our industry, which now has a lot of nonunion mini-mills. We are asking all locals to set up committees and organize in places they know are nonunion. We are also centering bargaining in our existing contracts on the right to have card checks at nonunion plants operated by the same employer," he says.

Tip 2: Hire a Talented Staff

Every organizing program needs full-time organizers who are responsible for starting and winning campaigns. To get the best results, you should:

- Hire a diverse staff that is representative of the workers you are organizing.
- Recruit from among your general membership, not just your leadership structure.
- Take advantage of the Organizing Institute training program for evaluation and training of member-organizers and outside recruits.
- Test people on the job through losttime organizing or Organizing Institute apprenticeships before giving them permanent positions.
- Establish clear terms and expectations for the position and set check-in points for evaluation. Take people who don't produce out of the organizing program.
- Create a career ladder for organizers and increase their responsibility over time. Don't lose your best organizers to other positions in the union.

Tip 3: Build a Member-Organizer Program

Member-organizers are the key to organizing large numbers of workers. They understand workers' fears and frustrations. Many have gone through winning organizing campaigns and remember hearing the infamous company bluff: If you try to go union, the place will shut down and you'll be out of a job.

"There is so much fear that you have to cut through," says Althea Leach, a volunteer organizer for UNITE Local 1371. "What helps is being a union member. It makes a big difference because you can talk to the workers at the same level. You know what they are going through because you are also a worker," she says.

A powerful member-organizer program requires leader support. You have to "make it real"—give it a structure, assign staff and give it a name. Then talk up the program, publicizing it in your newsletter, in speeches and on the shop floor.

Recruit energetic, committed activists who relate well to people and who have time to give on evenings and weekends for training and organizing. Go beyond existing leaders to recruit new activists. They'll need training—a one- or two-day session to start, with additional training and mentoring for active volunteers. Advanced training for member-organizers is available through the Organizing Institute and the George Meany Center.

Put your member-organizers to work right away, and make them accountable. Give them clear assignments and establish a two-way reporting system so they give and receive information about their work. Use a database or chart to record how much time volunteers give to organizing. And be sure to reward their hard work by recognizing them in newsletters and at meetings or special award events.

Tip 4: Use the Available Tools

Experienced organizers track their work so that they can evaluate a campaign accurately. You don't have to be a computer wizard to generate reports based on numbers rather than impressions.

Start with a campaign calendar that maps out events planned for the next four to six weeks. Include dates and deadlines for committee meetings, actions, materials production, press conferences, home visits and other "to-do" components that will make the campaign successful.

Wall charts are extremely helpful, indicating workers who are eligible to vote in an election and grouping them by job type, work area and shift. Progress can be tracked with colored markers; for example, all names of card signers might be highlighted in yellow, and the names of everyone who has been visited at home might be marked with a red dot. For larger campaigns, targeting bargaining units with more than 100 workers, organizers may want to use computer databases with software such as Day-Timer, Smart DiskLabeler, Lotus Organizer 97, Symantec Act! or Sidekick 98 to track activity.

Tip 5: Have a One-on-One Program

Build your campaign around face-to-face interaction with unorganized workers. Although sometimes this can be done at the worksite, usually people feel more comfortable talking



in their homes or other areas away from the boss's eye.

Member-organizers often are the most effective spokespersons for the union. But remember, *everyone* is an organizer. Think about requiring all staff to spend some time on home visits, and set an example by making house calls yourself.

The staff and volunteers need training in one-on-one communication, and to be prepared to deliver personalized, compelling messages. "Unorganized workers have no voice on the job and no power to make change," says AFL-CIO Organizing Director Richard Bensinger. "We need to listen to their problems and offer them a winning vision, educate the worker about the union and the campaign plan and assess the worker's support and willingness to get involved. Then we need to move the worker to action," he says.

Tip 6: Use Proven Tactics

Don't reinvent the wheel. Here are a few tactics that work:

- Make an employee roster early in the campaign, with names and addresses.
- Conduct home visits. When organizers made home visits to 60 percent to 75 percent of the workers, the win rate was 78 percent. With no house calls, the win rate was only
- Cultivate and encourage an active, in-plant organizing committee. Where a committee actively campaigned, the win rate was 62 percent. Where there was no active committee, the win rate was only 10 percent.
- Anticipate and preempt the employer's antiunion message. Explain to the unorganized workers that their employer may hold captive audience meetings, may threaten plant closures or offer raises—anything to keep the workers from having a voice on the job. Inoculation eases workers' fear and confu-

sion and gives the union credibility.

• Show strength. From wearing T-shirts, buttons and caps to signing petitions and speaking out at work, collective action is powerful.

That action can extend beyond the workplace. In one of the most successful organizing campaigns ever, UNITE joined with religious and community leaders outside Boston to support Richmark workers in their organizing efforts. Eight workers were fired from the curtain company for passing out union leaflets. Support poured in; congregations collected money and food and the

Latino community centers volunteered their facilities for meetings. "Workers trust churches and organizations in their communities, and these organizations want to be a part of the workers' struggle," says Bensinger.

Tip 7: Ask Hard Questions and Make Tough Decisions

It's not only your right, it's your job to get answers to some of the following questions from every organizer: How was the target selected? What is the overall campaign plan?

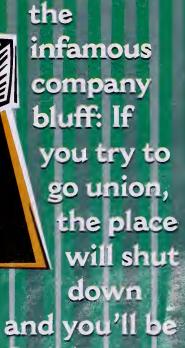
Are volunteer organizers involved? How will the campaign be assessed? What are the issues in the campaign? Are enough resources available? What are the goals and time lines for worker activity?

"A winning organizing program requires brutal honesty, serious planning and effective execution," says Bensinger. "If you are not winning now, then you need to look hard at your methods. We have learned

a lot about what works from successful organizing. Let's take advantage of that."

For more information, see Organizing that Works: Tips for Union Leaders, Organizing for Change, Changing to Organize (available from the AFL-CIO Order Desk at 815 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-637-5041) and Organizing Guide for Local Unions (available from the George Meany Center, 301-431-5451).

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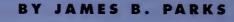


out of a job.

Community service fortifies th

Good Teeds,

Rebuilding: Trade union volunteers from northern California's Building Trades erect temporary pavilions to house businesses displaced by 1989 earthquake in Santa Cruz



actions speak louder than words, the labor movement's vast community services network speaks volumes.

Every day, from coast to coast, thousands of union members volunteer their time and skills to improve the quality of life in their communities. In Las Vegas, Electrical Workers members are helping to construct a Ronald McDonald House, a facility that allows parents to be close to their children who are undergoing medical treatment in nearby hospitals. Throughout the South, Laborers are working to rebuild churches that were set on fire in hate crimes. Across the country, Teamsters are using their big rigs to haul surplus food from supermarkets to homeless shelters.

Good

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strategy

oul—and builds a stronger labor movement.



These good deeds are making America's communities better places in which to live and raise families—but that's not all. Repeatedly, unions are finding out that community services are a strong and important factor in the overall campaign to build a stronger labor movement. They create good will that can be channeled into organizing and mobilization. Community services help union members to form lasting partnerships with members of the community who share the same values. And they show the community at large—and unorganized workers and potential allies in particular—a side of the labor movement that the media seldom recognize.

"It helps your organizing when unions can point to the fact that we help people, not just that we're interested in going out on strike or collecting dues," says Sherrie Sallaz, president of Communications Workers Local 4302 in Akron, Ohio, which just raised \$12,000 in a widely publicized event for a member injured in a motorcycle accident. Such activities, Sallaz says, help build a positive image of labor and make it easier to recruit members.

The network of union members helping to build that positive image is huge: Nearly every local union and central labor council in the country has a community services committee. About 20 community services state conferences are held annually. Nationwide, 258 AFL-CIO community services liaisons work with 25 local labor agencies to coordinate the efforts of thousands of members of local union community services committees. And each year, the federation trains some 6,000 union members to become "union counselors," who provide information and referrals to people in need in the workplace, union hall or neighborhood.

Community service volunteers not only have been through long hours of training, but also they have experience responding to situations that require immediate action. "These are incredibly selfless

people," many of whom are willing to coordinate mobilization or organizing activities, Sallaz says.

Recognizing that the work of building strong communities goes hand in hand with building stronger local labor movements, growing numbers of community service volunteers are lending their support, skills and experience to union organizing, bargaining and political and legislative campaigns. To encourage such partnerships, the AFL-CIO recently merged its community services program into its Field Mobilization Department. This year, the program's eight- to 10-week union counselor training sessions will incorporate information about how to provide strategic and tactical backup to local organizing and mobilization efforts.

Heroes Every Day

When a bomb leveled the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, volunteers from virtually every union in town joined in removing the rubble. Roughly 150 Teamsters' drivers, on their own time, made deliveries all over town, moving materials and files needed to keep displaced government agencies functioning. Firefighters searched for survivors around the clock, refusing to go home and resting on blankets beside the wreckage instead.

When a flood ravaged the city of St. Louis in 1993, union volunteers pitched in at mobile feeding sites. Union electricians hooked up power to food-storage trailers and created power sources where there were none. To prevent flood waters from ruining the food, these storage trailers stood more than four feet off the ground. Union carpenters built stairs to give volunteers access to the trailers.

When Hurricane Andrew destroyed thousands of homes in South Florida in 1992, SEIU nurses walked the streets providing basic medical care for victims. Meanwhile, building trades union members repaired,

tree of charge, severely damaged roofs. More than 150 Laborers operated three warehouses in which the Red Cross stockpiled its rescue and aid materials.

These high-profile efforts are the most visible and dramatic examples of what labor's community service volunteers do to ease human suffering. But disaster relief is only a small part of what union members do every day to make life better in their communities. Across the country, union volunteers are raising money for charity, sponsoring blood drives, steering workers in need to the right social agencies for special help and organizing youth activities and neighborhood cleanups. And union members are probably the largest single group trained in CPR in the country, notes Stanley Gordon, director of the AFL-CIO's Red Cross labor participation office. Union-sponsored CPR classes train 5,000 to 10,000 members each year; the Painters alone have 150 CPR instructors who trained 2,500 members in 1997.

Organizing on the Front Lines

Shoring up: Members of Laborers

Locals 110 and 718 sandbag levee in

Kimmswick, Mo., before 1993 floods

"Although we get a lot of credit for the big things we do like helping flood victims, it's the day-to-day stuff like giving blood and paying light bills—providing a service—that builds the most enduring long-range benefits for a union," says Royetta Sanford, IBEWs human services director. "People remember what you do for them individually. It sets up in people's minds an image that is different from the 'bad union'

propaganda that many employers throw out there."

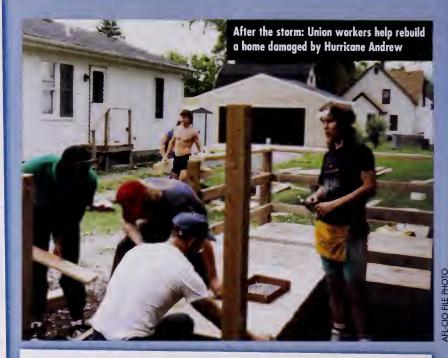
And community services programs that help people pay pastdue utility bills or feed their children put union volunteers in contact with low-wage workersand give them the opportunity to refer these workers to an organizing committee. "It's not a stretch to tell someone who needs help paying bills that they might get paid more if they belonged to a union," says Sanford. "Or if someone complains at the Boy Scout meeting that they're working too many hours, you give the same answer—union."

An active presence in the community supports organizing in other ways. "We've found that people who join the union have

interests in issues other than wages, hours and working conditions," says Tom Moran of AFT's Organization and Field Services Department. "They're interested in things like the Boy Scouts, and food banks. If the union is involved in the same groups, then it's easier to get people to sign up." This is particularly true in the South and Southwest, where there are no public employee collective bargaining rights or agency shops, he adds, and the union must continuously organize one person at a time.

An active presence is also a key to organizing among today's increasingly diverse workforce. Unions are discovering that they can establish solid relationships and a pro-union culture among many racial and ethnic communities through volunteer work such as sponsoring citizenship classes for immigrant workers or helping to build or repair low-income housing.

A union must prove it can provide leadership before workers can trust it, says UNITE Vice President Katie Quan. If an organizer already is known as someone who is interested in community issues, then he or she has already established the respect needed to convince people to join a new cause like the union, she says. That's one reason UNITE and



several other affiliated unions have established "justice centers" in immigrant communities to provide services and coordinate actions around community issues, which, Quan says, provide a positive atmosphere for organizing.

Ready for Rapid Response

Hoping to build support for their contract campaign at Leclede Steel in October, members of Steelworkers Local 3643 turned for help to Glenda Arnett, the AFL-CIO's labor liaison with the United Way in Alton, Ill. Arnett quickly helped the local prepare for the possibility of a strike, providing training on how to establish a strike-assistance program for union members. In addition, she furnished the names and addresses of 300 community and religious activists in town—a list drawn from a community services roundtable she chairs each year, where service providers and referral agencies brainstorm on ways to improve service delivery in the area—as well as the names and addresses of every public official in the county.

Information that would otherwise take days or weeks for local unions to compile—time that can't be spared when rapid response is needed—is often at the fingertips of community service activists. They have unique skills, knowledge and contacts; they know the local turf—its unions and the larger community. They have access to union volunteers and experience in training union members.

Community service activists often know how to mobilize large groups of people quickly. Because they regularly coordinate with local unions in the area, they know which unions have relationships with community groups and which unions can turn out members for Street Heat mobilizations and other projects.

And more and more, community service volunteers are putting their skills to good use in strategic mobilization campaigns. One dramatic example came in 1996, when the nationwide community services network played a key role in the AFL-CIO's massive and highly effective Working Women Vote effort by providing contact with union activists in more than 100 communities.

That role will become increasingly significant in the coming years, as the labor movement intensifies efforts to educate communities about unions and what they do, mobilize union members around issues that affect working families and reach out to unorganized workers.

For more information on how to form a local community services committee or how to receive union counselor training, contact your state federation, local central body, local community services program or the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department at 202-637-5191.

74¢ on the Dollar IS NOT ENOUGH

Women still are paid less than men-even in similar jobs and when they have similar education, skills and experience. Women earn 74 cents for each dollar earned by men. That's \$26 less to spend on groceries, housing, child care and other expenses for every \$100 worth of work women do.

Because women earn less, they have smaller pensions when they retire. Women's private-pension benefits in 1994 were less than half those of men—just \$3,000 a year, compared with \$7,800.

There's still plenty of garden-variety pay discrimination—that is, women being paid less than men who are doing the same jobs. However, pay discrimination also comes in other forms. Women don't have equal job opportunities, meaning a newly hired woman may get a lowerpaying assignment than a man starting work for the same employer. That first job starts her career path, and it can lead to a lifetime of lower pay. Women also lack an equal chance at promotions, training and apprenticeships. So they don't move up the earnings ladder as men do.

🣥 Jobs traditionally held by women continue to pay less than "men's work"—that's another type of pay discrimination. Sixty-one percent of working women hold sales, clerical and service jobs, which simply pay less than male strongholds such as manufacturing and upper-level managerial jobs.

Women are working to improve their pay prospects through education; college enrollment of women now exceeds that of men. But education is not a guaranteed inoculation against pay discrimination. A bachelor's degree puts a woman less than \$3,000 a year ahead of a man with just a high school diploma, leaving her \$12,658 behind a man whose education

Last year's Ask a Working Woman surveys revealed that women's greatest workplace concern is pay—equal pay. A look at data about women's wages shows that their concerns are well-founded:

Federal laws-and some state and local laws as well-make it illegal for employers to pay women less just because they are women. In the 35 years since this country made pay discrimination against women illegal, the pay gap has narrowed from 41 cents per dollar to 26 cents. But most of the recent change results from men earning less today in real dollars, not because women are earning more.

matches her own. With a master's degree, she's \$14,134 behind her male peers. A professional degree brings her an annual income that is \$24,385—or 33 percent—less than that of a man with the same degree.

🣥 "Women's work" pays better if you're a man. Women in administrative support and clerical jobs earn 20 percent less than men in those jobs. Among elementary and secondary school teachers, women earn 15.2 percent less than men. The gap between men's and women's pay is 14.2 for social workers, 12.5 percent for health technologists and technicians and 4.7 percent for registered nurses.

Union membership narrows the pay gap for women by more than onethird—a powerful case to make when organizing women. Union women earn 84 cents for every dollar earned by union men, compared with 74 cents for women workers overall.

Union leaders and activists across the country will be tackling pay inequity through a Working Women Want Equal Pay campaign, according to AFL-CIO Working Women Department Director Karen Nussbaum. The campaign will include grassroots rallies, Street Heat mobilization confronting employers that discriminate, organizing and targeted lawsuits where warranted.

"Families depend on working women," Nussbaum says. "So when women don't get equal pay it hurts families. It's harder to make ends meet, and to save for a child's education and retirement

"This isn't just a matter of self-esteem," she says. "For many people it's a matter of family survival."

In hundreds of communities around the country, the AFL-CIO will join with the National Committee on Pay Equity April 1-3 to call for Equal PayDay. To find out how to get involved, call 202-835-8286.

To join the Working Women Working Together Network and receive regular information about the equal pay campaign, call toll-free 1-888-971-9797. More facts about pay inequity are available from the Department of Labor's Fair Pay Clearinghouse, 800-347-3742; the Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1400 20th St., N.W., Suite 104, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-785-5100; the National Committee on Pay Equity, 1126 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-331-7343; and in Salaried and Professional Women: Relevant Statistics, from the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-638-0320.

he lives and accomplishments of 10 notable women in labor history were celebrated with a multimedia presentation at the

Massachusetts AFL-CIO's 40th annual convention in late October.

We Were There, the

brainchild of labor activist Flo Stern and folk singer Bev Grant, uses slides, songs and the spoken word to profile the lives and accomplishments of renowned women labor leaders such as Mother Jones, Jessica Govea and Rose Schneiderman.

tribute to women labor leaders

We Were There: Folksinger Bev Grant rehearses for

The production is designed to allow local women to step into the shoes of these leaders by taking on their personae and reading their original writings—all against a backdrop formed by larger-than-life images of the women.

Kathy Casavant, who chairs the Federation's Women's Committee, brought the presentation to the convention after seeing it at a labor women's conference last summer. "The production gives audience members and participants a real sense of who these women were and are, what they accomplished and how their contributions still affect all of us today," she says.

The Medium Is the Message

hen Khan Tran, an organizer for UFCW Local

428 in San Jose, hosted a radio

program on

workers' rights over a local Viet-

namese radio

station, the message reached workers at high-tech Supracor Systems. The workers contacted

Tran and asked for help in forming a union. After a tough campaign, the workers-mostly

> immigrants from Mexico, Bosnia, Vietnam and

Samoa—voted to join the union.





here were demonstrations and speeches, laughs and giggles, ice cream and fun.

of Labor's Message

It wasn't the usual monthly meeting of the St. Louis Central Labor Council. It was Kids' Night.

CLC President Bob Kelley thought it would be a good idea to invite a few dozen children to the monthly meeting, where they could learn about unionism and its relationship to the work-a-day world.

Kelley's daughter, Amy Phillips, told the youths about the life of a 10-year-old boy who worked in a textile factory in the early 1900s, and how unions fought so children could go to school rather than to work, and to shorten the work week so families could enjoy weekends together. Explaining what it means to be a union member, Kelley challenged one girl to try to break a pencil. When she did, Kelley asked her to try to break a handful of pencils. She couldn't. Lesson learned.

Kids' Night began in earnest when a variety of union members showed the kids what they do every day. AFTRA members operated hand puppets, Meatcutters



Work can be fun: AFTRA members Doug Feltch and Robert Lynn with puppet friends

Local 88 members sliced bologna, salami and cheese for sandwiches and HERE Local 74 members dished up ice cream.

Every union had a chance to get into the act. A Carpenters Local 5 member built a workbench, IBEW Local 1 members talked about electric power generation and UFCW Local 655 passed out coloring books and buttons. The kids even got on television—an IBEW Local 4 member videotaped them and they viewed themselves on a nearby monitor.

"These kids need to hear the union message," Kelley says. "I hope this program will encourage other unions to put on projects of their own, for the benefit of their members' kids." 🛭







Bad Role

Sprint—which gained notoriety by firing 177 mostly
Latina workers at La
Conexion Familiar in San
Francisco in 1994—recently
surveyed 500 workers in small
businesses to find out whom they
judged the least productive worker



on television. Cheers' Norm Peterson was deemed the worst role model, followed by Homer Simpson and George Costanza of Seinfeld. Quizzed about the song lyrics that best describe their job, workers gave top honors to I Work Hard for the Money, followed by Eight Days a Week, Working for the Weekend, Happy Days Are Here Again and Take This Job and Shove It.

TRAFFIC JAM FOR JUSTICE

FSCME Local 1199C has no boundaries when it comes to standing up for its members. After 1,200 employees were laid off by Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation, which operates nine local hospitals in Pennsylvania, almost 2,000 workers and their supporters marched in protest, causing law officials to detour traffic for several blocks in the Philadelphia area.

"The fallout of the announced layoffs and cutbacks threatens the economic stability of our region and therefore needs an immediate response," says Henry Nicholas, president of the local.

Leading off the Oct. 28 rally was activist and songwriter Anne Feeney, president of the Pittsburgh Musicians Union. "Listen up Sherif, you thief. You're busted," she sang, referring to Sherif Abdelhak, Allegheny's chief executive.



UNION LINE

Union Shod

Ithough imported shoes are responsible for "booting" many U.S. shoemakers out of jobs, the creation of top-quality shoes and boots remains the source of livelihood for thousands of union brothers and sisters. Support them by looking for American-made, union-label footwear. The union-made shoes and boots listed here are made by members of the UFCW and UNITE. The manufacturers make private-label shoes for hundreds of customers, such as Sears, J.C. Penney, L.L. Bean, Land's End and many others.

Children's Shoes—Rocky brand by Rocky Shoes and Boots; GAP Kids by U S Sport Shoe Co.; Jibs, Striderite, Sporto, Walt Disney and D.C. Comics by Columbia Footwear Corp.; Wee Kids, Baby Deer, Wee Walker, Trimkids, McBaby, Tiny Steps, Teva, Creeks Bridges and Caliope by Trimfoot Shoes; Hush Puppies and Mr. Brick by Tru-Stitch Footwear.

Men's Shoes—Florsheim brand by Florsheim Shoe Co. (many Florsheim products, however, are imported; check for country of origin and union labels); U S Sport, Dexter, 9-West, Easy Times and Town-Craft brands by U S Sport Shoe Co.; Rocky brand by Rocky Shoes and Boots; Hush Puppies, Mason, Bates and Arizona Mail Order brands by Wolverine World Wide, Inc.; Iron Age brand by Iron Age Safety Shoe Co.; Belleville brand by Belleville Shoe Mfg., Co.; Red Wing and Irish Setter brands by Red Wing Shoe Co.; Jibs by Columbia Footwear Corp.; Drew for Men by Drew Shoe; Weinbrenner, Wood-N-Stream and Mainstream brands by Weinbrenner Shoe Co.; Nunn-Bush and Stacy-Adams brands by Weyco Group, Inc.; Danner brand by Danner Shoe Mfg., Co.; Totes (if made in America); Double Tuff brand by Cove Shoe Co.; Firesider, Sioux Mox, Mr. Bick, Quoddy, Adirondack and Hush Puppies by Tru-Stitch Footwear; Mason, Comfort Zone, Field & Stream, Walkabouts and Executive Imperials by Mason Shoe Mfg., Co.

Women's Shoes—Johansen brand by Johansen Shoe Co.; U S Sport and TownCraft brands by U S Sport Shoe Co.; Hush Puppies by Wolverine World Wide, Inc.; Iron Age brand by Iron Age Safety Shoe Co.; Firesider, Sioux Mox, Mr. Bick, Quoddy, Adirondack and Hush Puppies by Tru-Stitch Footwear; Red Wing and Irish Setter brands by Red Wing Shoe Co.; Jibs brand by Columbia Footwear Corp.; Barefoot Freedom and Footsaver brands by Drew Shoe; Weinbrenner, Wood-N-Stream and Mainstream brands by Weinbrenner Shoe Co.; Danner brand by Danner Shoe Mfg., Co.; Totes (if made in America); Mason, Comfort Zone, Field & Stream and Walkabouts by Mason Shoe Mfg., Co.

Boots—Chippewa, Diamond J and Justin brands by Justin Boot Co.; Rocky brand by Rocky Shoes and Boots; Belleville brand by Belleville Shoe Mfg., Co.; Pecos Boots by Red Wing Shoe Co.; Brass Boot brand by Weyco Group, Inc.; Matterhorn, Corcoran and Double Tuff brands by Cove Shoe Co.; Uggs by Trimfoot Shoe; Fin & Feather and Work America by Mason Shoe Mfg., Co.



Shopidis

What is an employer's responsibility? And what is the union's duty to eliminate sexual harassment on the job?

Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is a tactic to dominate by embarrassment or degradation. Anyone can be affected by it, but women are the primary targets.

harassment complaints. As a key first step, the steward or union officer hearing the complaint should be sensitive and listen carefully to the victim, because it may be difficult for him or her to talk in detail about the harassment.

Unions should insist that employers take sexual harassment complaints seriously, handle them with sensitivity and confidentially and take action promptly. A good starting point for local union for more information or call the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 800-669-4000 (for the hearing impaired, TTY at 800-669-6820).

The AFL-CIO urges that unions combat sexual harassment on the job through every legitimate means possible, including establishing policies, educating workers and management, using the grievance procedure and, when nec-

EXUALHARASSMEN

In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination, and unions and employers can be held accountable for it in the workplace. Under the law, employers have the responsibility to investigate complaints of sexual harassment by supervisors, co-workers or non-employees. If sexual harassment has occurred, it is the employer's responsibility to take appropriate action to make sure it ends.

The role of unions begins at the shop-floor level. Unions should investigate all sexual

the union is to have contract language that deals properly with sexual harassment.

In some cases, a union may need to represent both the accuser and the accused. When this occurs, the union may want to consider separate representation for each employee.

Union members also can be a line of defense, noting when a co-worker is being sexually harassed, being supportive of the victim and encouraging her or him to formally report the harassment to the union or a supervisor.

Workers who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment should call their

essary, taking legal action. The Federation's Civil and Human Rights Department recently published *Sexual Harassment in the Work-place*, a new pamphlet explaining rights and responsibilities. To order, call 202-637-5041. Single copies are free and multiple copies are 35 cents each.



LOK LKOULTINE WELLALIS. GAESLIONS WAS WISMEES

Q. When the National Labor Relations
Board rules in the union's favor, and the court affirms the NLRB, does the NLRB have the authority to enforce its decision or does the union have to follow up in court?

A: A final order by the NLRB is not "selfexecuting," which means that to enforce it the NLRB must file a petition for enforcement with the appropriate federal appeals court. Only the NLRB may petition the court for enforcement. Until the NLRB's order is enforced by the appeals court, the guilty party (in this case the company) will not incur any penalty for continued disobedience. Once the NLRB's order is enforced through court order, however, the NLRB will take immediate steps to ensure compliance.

Q. My union is involved in an organizing drive. What can I tell the workers about their rights to campaign at their workplace?

A. Generally, an employee can verbally campaign for the union in working and non-working areas, but only during his or her non-work time. An

employee also can wear a union button or other insignia, unless it might pose a safety hazard or is incompatible with an employerrequired uniform. If an employer allows workers to engage in casual conversation while working, they also may discuss the union as long as work is not disrupted. An employee also has the right to distribute literature, during non-work time and in non-work areas. If the employer allows distribution of other non-work-related literature in work areas, such as charity solicitations or personal announcements, it is unlawful to restrict only the distribution of union literature. For more information, contact your union's organizing department, the AFL-CIO Organizing Department at 202-639-6200, or your local NLRB office.

Have a question? Drop us a line, post us a message or pick up the phone, and we'll try to find the answer. Write us at 815 16th St., N.W., Room 402, Washington, D.C. 20006; e-mail to 71112.53@compuserve.com; call 202-637-5010 or fax 202-508-6908.

About Child Labor

Two publications on child labor from the Teachers' Child Labor Project are available free to unions for placement in

D.C. 20001-2079.



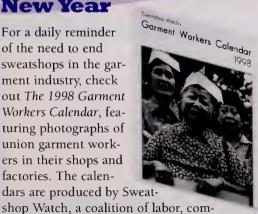
schools and classrooms. A reprint of "Children Without Childhoods," a 12-page article from AFT's American Educator magazine, explains what is happening to the 200 million children who are forced to work, and what actions readers can take. Child Labor compiles materials published in newspapers, newsletters and magazines about child labor around the world. To order, call Trang Dang at 202-879-4400, ext. 3616 or write to her at AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington,

For-Profit Medicine

Can For-Profit Medicine Be Compatible With Good Health Care? Robert Kuttner, co-founder and co-editor of American Prospect magazine, answered the question in a speech before the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees' Health Service Occupations Committee. The speech, revised for publication, is available from DPE by calling Marjorie Wheeler at 202-638-0320, ext. 4. The price is \$3; quantity prices are available on request.

A Sweat-Free **New Year**

For a daily reminder of the need to end sweatshops in the garment industry, check out The 1998 Garment Workers Calendar, featuring photographs of union garment workers in their shops and factories. The calen-



munity, civil rights, immigrant rights and women's organizations, along with attorneys and other advocates committed to ending sweatshops in the garment industry. Each calendar is \$13.50 plus \$2 shipping and handling (California residents must add 8.5 percent sales tax). For 10 or more calendars, the price drops to \$12 each. Make checks payable to Sweatshop Watch, 720 Market St., San Francisco, Calif. 94102. For information call 415-391-1655, ext. 36.

A Novel Approach to Labor History

Eager to teach your youngster about how workers have struggled against employers to gain the wages and benefits we enjoy today? Try J. Sydney Jones' novel, Frankie, which is set in Trinidad, Colo., during the winter of 1913-1914. The story is narrated by a farm boy who was drawn into the strike between Colorado Fuel and Iron and its miners by a teenage girl named Frankie. The miners, kicked out of company housing, spent the winter in tents. The strike was little known until company thugs torched the tents early one morning, killing 11 children and four women. The book, written for young adults, is available from Lodestar Books/Penguin Putnam for \$16.99. Check your local bookstore or call 800-253-6476.

Who Stole the **American Dream?**

Steele, a Pulitzer Prize-winning team of

As the world approaches the millennium, the "American dream" of a successful career and time to enjoy a loving family life is slipping away. America: Who Stole the Dream? is a new book that explores how the rich keep getting richer while the middle

class and the poor don't. The book is written by Donald Bartlett and James investigative reporters formerly with the Philadelphia Inquirer. Their book adds perspective to the lopsided struggle between the haves and have-nots. Check your bookstore or order from Andrews and McMeel, P.O. Box 419242, Kansas City, MO 64141 or phone 800-642-6480. The cost is \$9.95 plus \$2 for shipping.

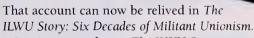
The New **Majority**

In a series of essays by noted academics and political activists, The New Majority: Toward a Popular Progressive Politics explores how the Democratic Party can rebuild a new majority among voters "by cham-

pioning the needs and values of American families striving for a better life in the face of unsettling changes." The book was edited by Stanley Greenberg and Theda Skocpol and published by Yale University Press.

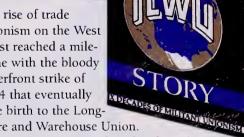
The ILWU Story

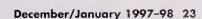
The rise of trade unionism on the West Coast reached a milestone with the bloody waterfront strike of 1934 that eventually gave birth to the Longshore and Warehouse Union.



In pictures and text, The ILWU Story describes the conditions that gave rise to trade unionism among longshoremen: "The work was brutal, conditions unsafe, employment irregular and the pay too low to support a family." But with steadfastness and courage, the union secured a better life for its members and their families.

For price and ordering information, contact the ILWU Library at 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, Calif. 94109.





And Organizing for the Twenty-First Century



A Full Participation/Civil Rights Conference Sponsored by the AFL-CIO and Our Constituency

Groups—the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Pride at Work

when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream—a dream yet unfulfilled.

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
AFL-CIO Convention, December 1961

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT HOW
TO BE PART
OF THIS
HISTORIC
EVENT, CALL
202-637-5180.

March 27—29, 1998
Wyndham Hotel
(Airport Location)
Los Angeles

- Labor's civil rights leaders and representatives of the AFL-CIO constituency groups will come together in March to begin mapping an agenda to make full participation a reality in the workplace, in society and in unions.
- We will share perspectives on the status of workers of color, working women and sexual minority workers, and discuss union organizing as an opportunity to bring needed change to our jobs and communities.
- In two workshop tracks we'll learn more about the strategic connections between the urban agenda and labor's agenda, and about issues for organizing people of color, women and young workers.



